

The Virtual Arts and Life Magazine

r e i

February 2017

GEM PREIZ - No Frontiers

by Art Blue



Tales of the City
told by Cassie Parker

Secrets
Cat Boccaccio

Footfalls Echo:
Epiphany

Drover Mahogany

POETRY: Trilling/
Juliesse/Madrigal/Boberg

CONTENTS

read *rez* Magazine online at <http://rezmagazine.com>

- **No Frontiers** Gem Preiz's work conjures up the vastness of time and space, meticulously crafted fractal images now on exhibit at LEA16. Art Blue explains, as only he can.
- **This is How** Merope Madrigal devotes her exquisite poem of love and commitment to our very own Jullianna and Mariner.
- **Tales of the City** Cassie Parker takes us behind the scenes at Whitechapel, the London of yesteryear and the center of her and Chrissy Rhiano's Victorian vision, soon to be arriving at LEA10.
- **Safe in the Arms of Yahweh** Leave it to Mariner Trilling to lead us into temptation, or at least his startling version of it.
- **Day One** If you don't like what you see, say so. Jullianna Juliesse gives us all a civics lesson about freedom of speech.
- **Secrets** Cat Boccaccio tells us about a secret often thought about but never spoken.
- **Footfalls Echo: Epiphany** Drover Mahogany lets us join him on one of his contemplative walks, and recalls past moments.
- **Spring Morning After Berry** We are delighted to welcome Tamara Boberg and her exquisite poetry to our pages. More, please.

About the Cover: If you've never seen the work of Gem Preiz, then you've not been paying attention. He's graced the pages of many an Art Blue piece, pairing his unique monolithic, futuristic vision with Art's riffs on the infinite. You still have time to visit LEA16, where you can see 16 of his best pieces in his amazing exhibit, *No Frontiers*.



F_{riday}

with
DJ Gray
and Jami

Tonight's Theme:

?

Night

Howelsen
75, 234, 1545

9-11 SLT

Live



Three female Second Life avatars are shown in white dance costumes. The woman on the left has long dark hair and wears a white off-the-shoulder top and white pants. The woman in the center has wavy brown hair and wears a white top with a lace belt and white pants. The woman on the right has long blonde hair and wears a light grey top and pants. They are all in dynamic dance poses.

use]
dance company

of Second Life ™



AFTER DARK — LOUNGE —

on Idle Rogue

contact: Meegan Danitz
meegan.danitz@gmail.com
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SWING POOL

A collage of images featuring palm trees, a beach, and people dancing on a wooden deck. The top half of the image has a blue gradient background with the words "SWING POOL" in large white script. Below this, the word "BEACH" is formed by several palm trees. The bottom half shows a beach scene with a wooden boardwalk in the foreground and a city skyline in the background. A "ADULTS ONLY" sign is visible on the right. The overall aesthetic is tropical and social.

COUPLES & SINGLES

ADULTS ONLY



W/DER JOURNEY

PLAYGROUND

18+



Each month this year we are including one of the months from Molly Bloom's 2017 calendar, which was produced by Art Blue, with the help of Jami Mills. Art has sent copies of this wonderful example of immersive art to many well-respected museums around the world in his single-handed effort to preserve the finest examples of early immersive art, before they are lost forever.

Molly Bloom 2017
The Queen is Not Amused



art direction/photography: jami mills
production: art blue

• r - e - z •



“With ‘Shotgun Wedding,’ Molly displays the wit and charm that makes her work so accessible and popular. She brings together themes of drama and comedy, all with her tongue firmly planted in her cheek.” Jami Mills

February

shotgun wedding



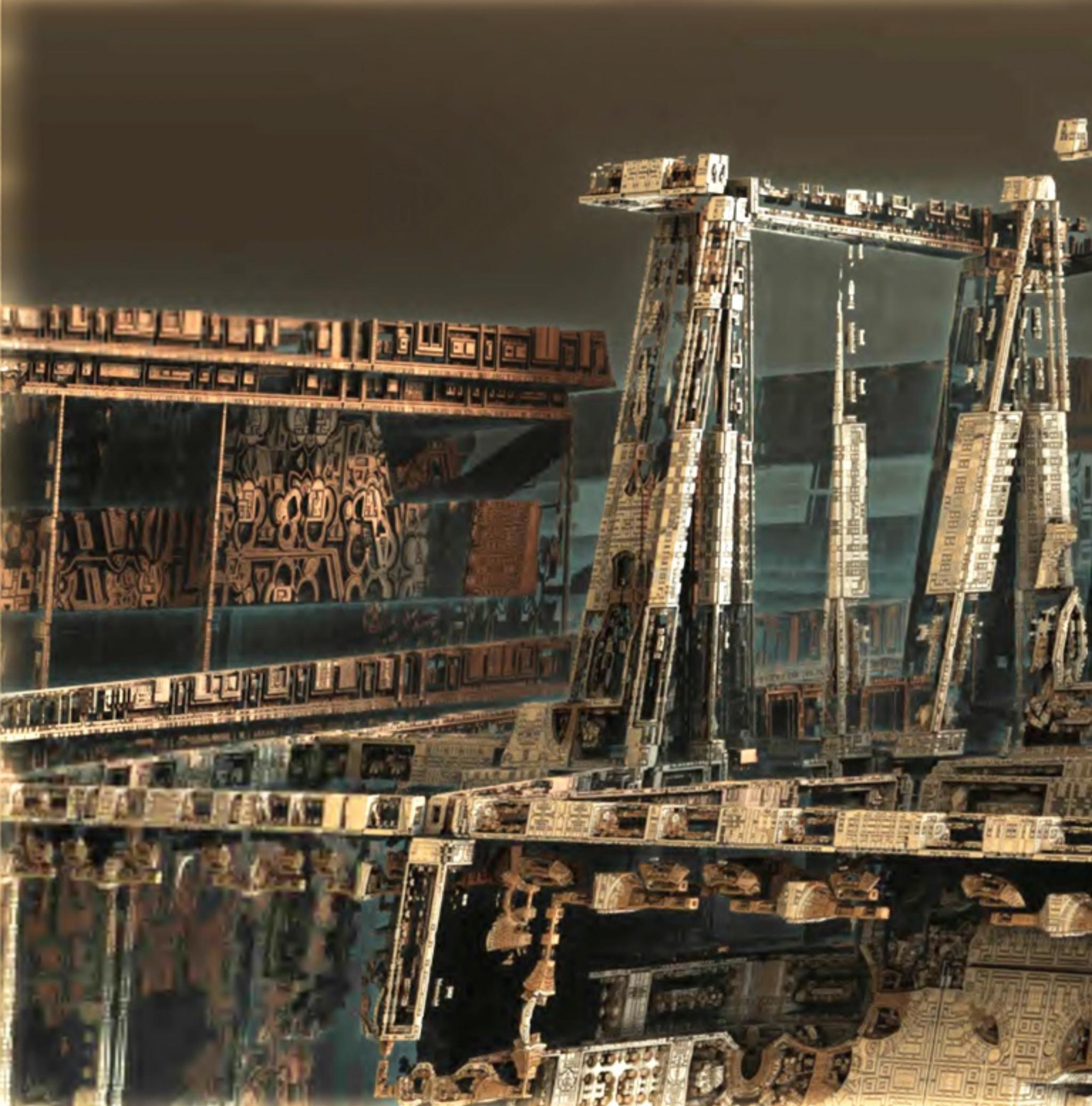
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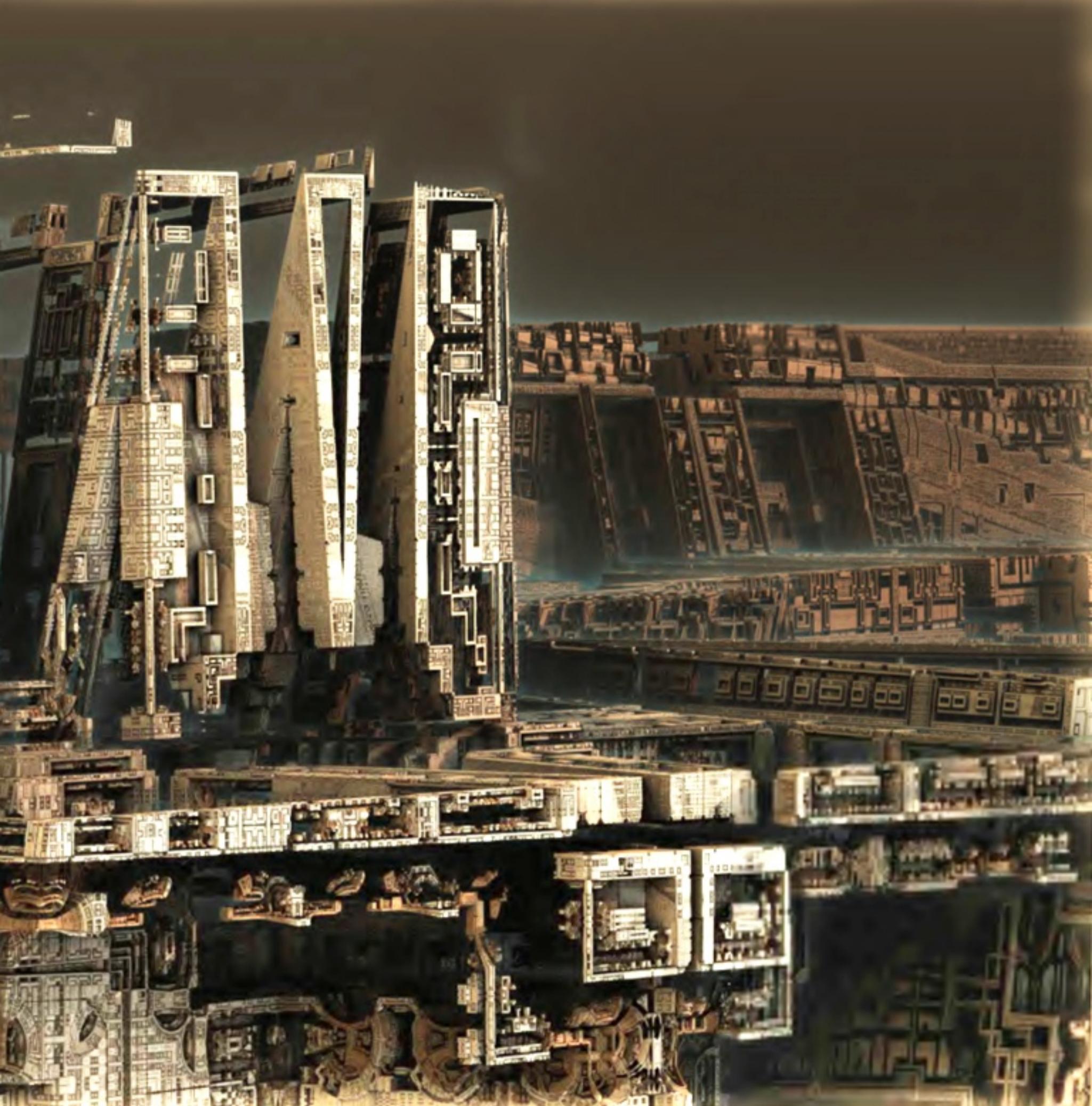
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No Frontiers - The Artist
by Art Blue



City of Gem Preiz

When you are a believer in *rez* as the magazine for Life and Arts in Virtual Worlds and you read the title No Frontiers, then your mind might drift. You know that it can't be just a report of an installation, not just a come and go. It is a cover story. There must be something of world importance. When you then read in the notecard the artist provides that the installation is about understanding the universe, then you have only two options when you know the artist's name. You can believe -- or you go inside. For me it was not an "or" option. I believe AND I go.

This installation is exactly what the note card says:

NO FRONTIERS

"far away, beyond all seas, all frontiers, all countries, all beliefs"
– from Amin Maalouf

"This exhibition of fractals consists in 16 high resolution frames and invites you to dream along a futuristic journey towards the stars.

All boards are made of about 18 plates carefully stuck and displayed in environments built specifically, the minimalist structures of which (often fractals by themselves) contrast with the complexity of the images. These surroundings aim to bring the 3rd

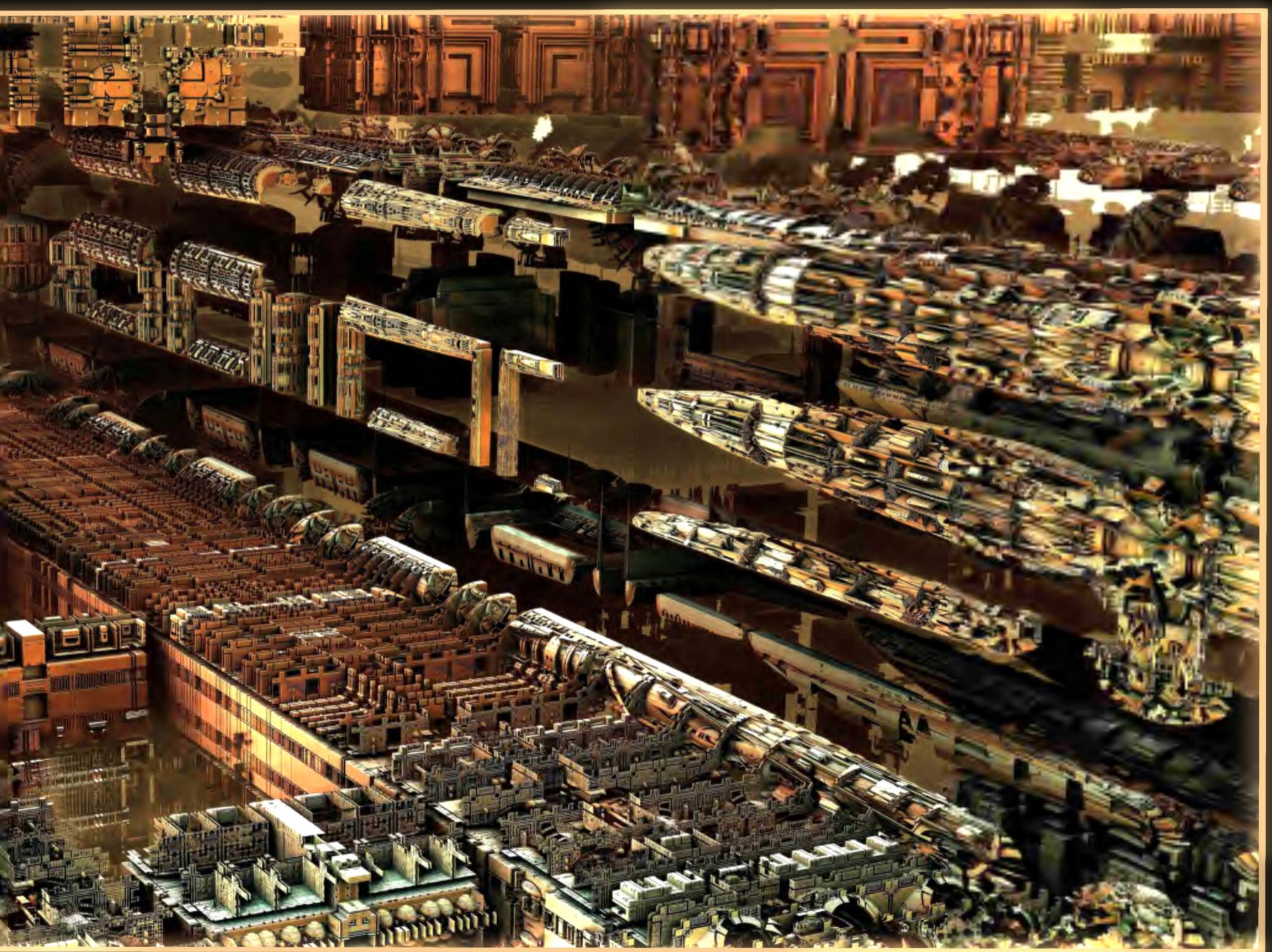
dimension to pictures genuinely 2D, and provide to the visitors a volume to move in 3D, either simply flying or piloting vehicles they can find in the entrance hall. The 4th dimension is also present through components the periodic synchronizations of which beat a slow tempo.



In counterpoint of Metropolis and Wrecks, two of my last exhibitions, No Frontiers is inspired by a resolutely

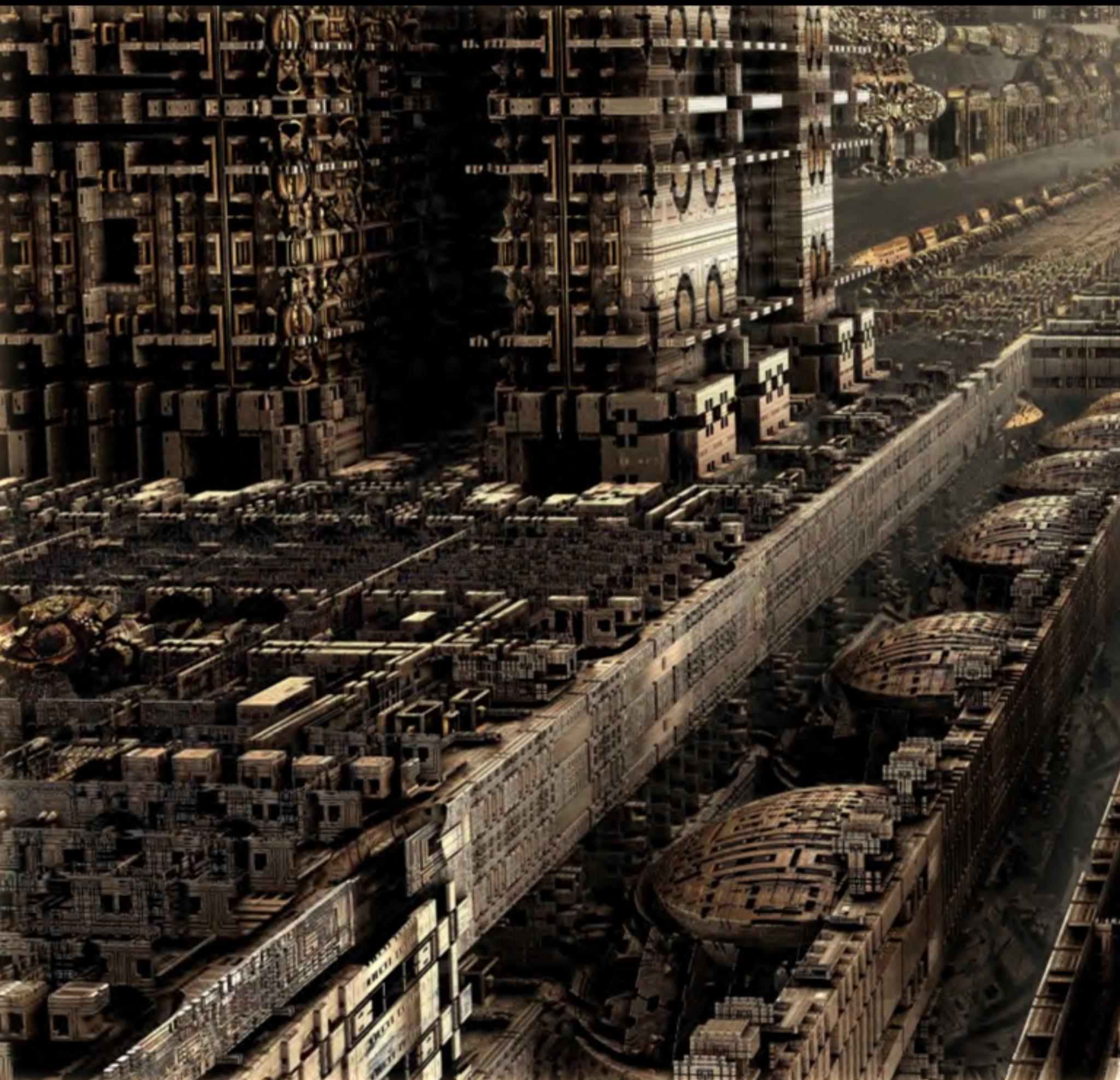
optimistic vision. The technology turns into something more aesthetic than enslaving, and the journeys to the outer space are no longer runaways but explorations, as those of real astronauts which will maybe allow to realize one of the dreams of Mankind (and for me its ultimate vocation):

What to do when the pictures, the impressions have immersed in you and you want to describe them knowing it is nice to say this installation makes the Deaf hear and the Blind see. But words don't create an immersive experience; they are just words. So I had a great idea. You know that I think



understand the Universe." – words by
Gem Preiz

I am a genius, but such people often fail totally and nearly no one understands them, so I wanted to hand

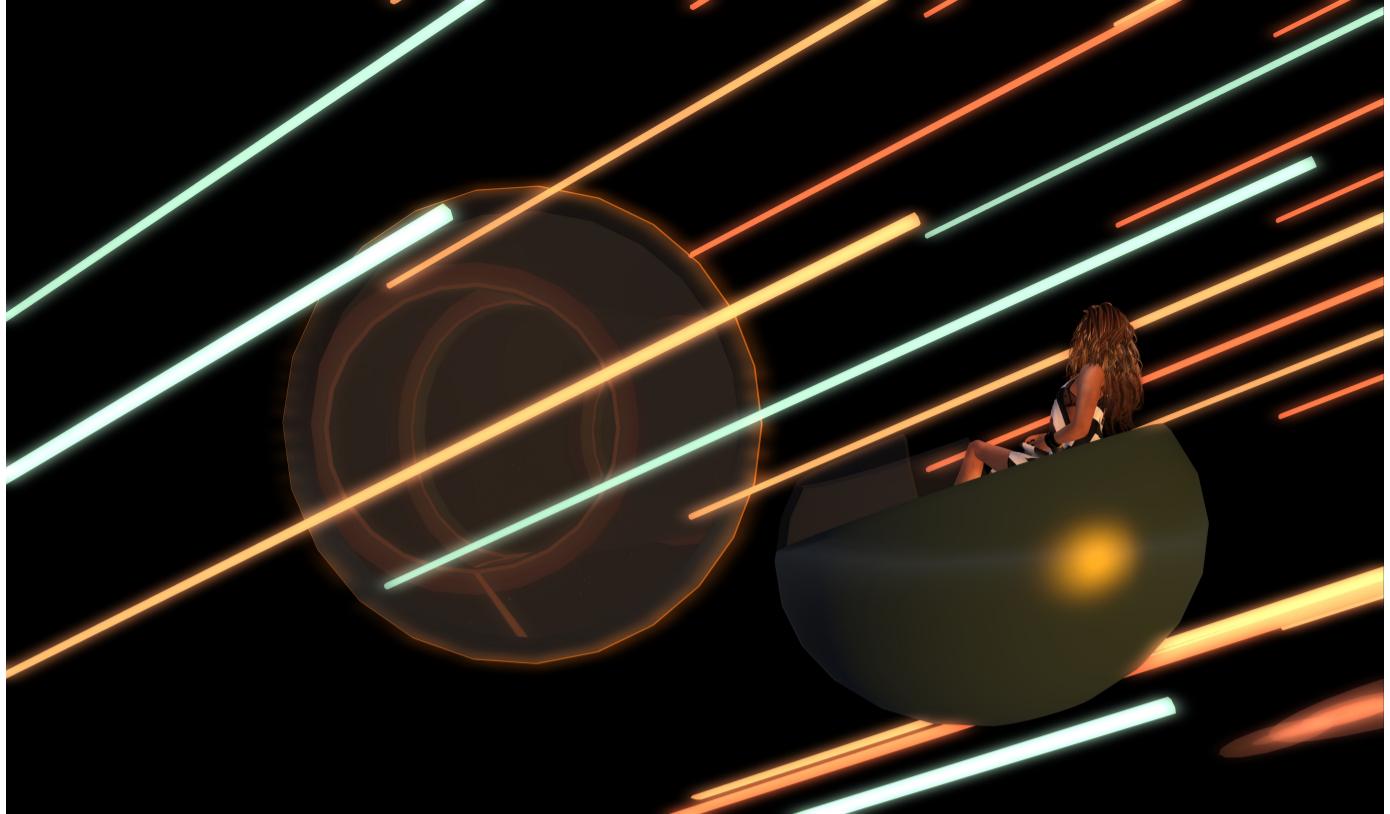




the ball over to Jami. I sent her a message if she likes to join me to explore No Frontiers, and she said “Yeah, Art. When it’s you, I can’t say no.” So I was there a second time and discussed with Jami Mills how to get this experience as a cover story. Jami said, “I’ll do an interview with Gem and you write something. Deal?”

So I sit here and feel like before. How shall I make the way? I will not say the Deaf shall hear and the Blind see, as it is easy to see and to hear what Gem Preiz presents. You teleport to the land he got as an artist in residence by Linden Endowment for the Arts (LEA16), you rez in the welcome hall where your senses are tuned to what is about to come. The ambient music made for No Frontiers fades in. I suggest you take the bubble. There is also a fighter offered, so drifter or fighter? I am an ex-pilot and the fighter suits me, but my mind shall drift slowly with the wind. So I said to myself, I shall be a pilot and drift, a combination that takes me out of reality.

Then after one hour having passed all stations, all the connecting tubes used, having explored in total 16 rooms,



each a piece of immersed art on its own, I am speechless. The music let my mind drift, the installment as a whole rendered my brain. I feel triggered. I know when Jami will read these lines she will suggest a change. I

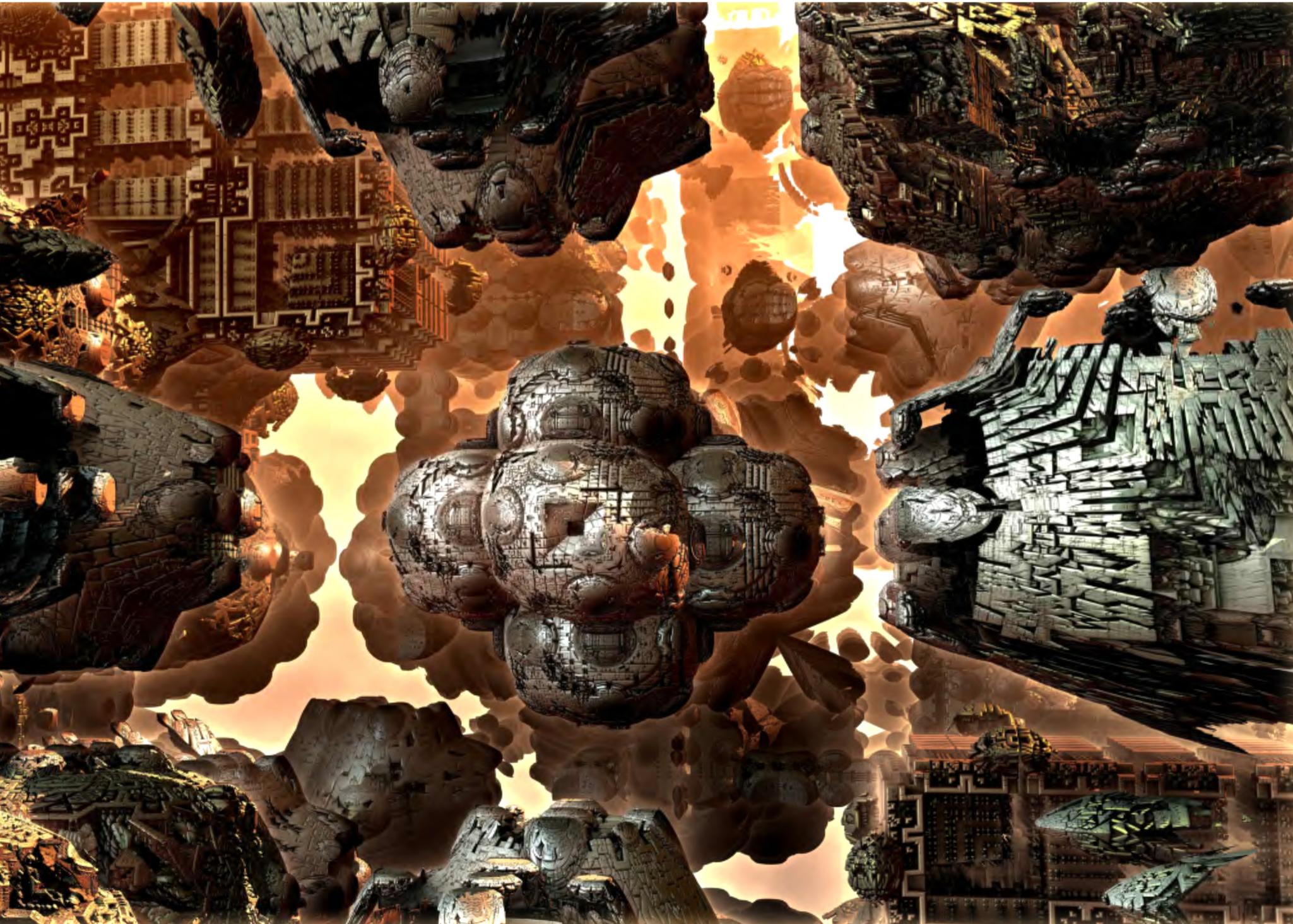


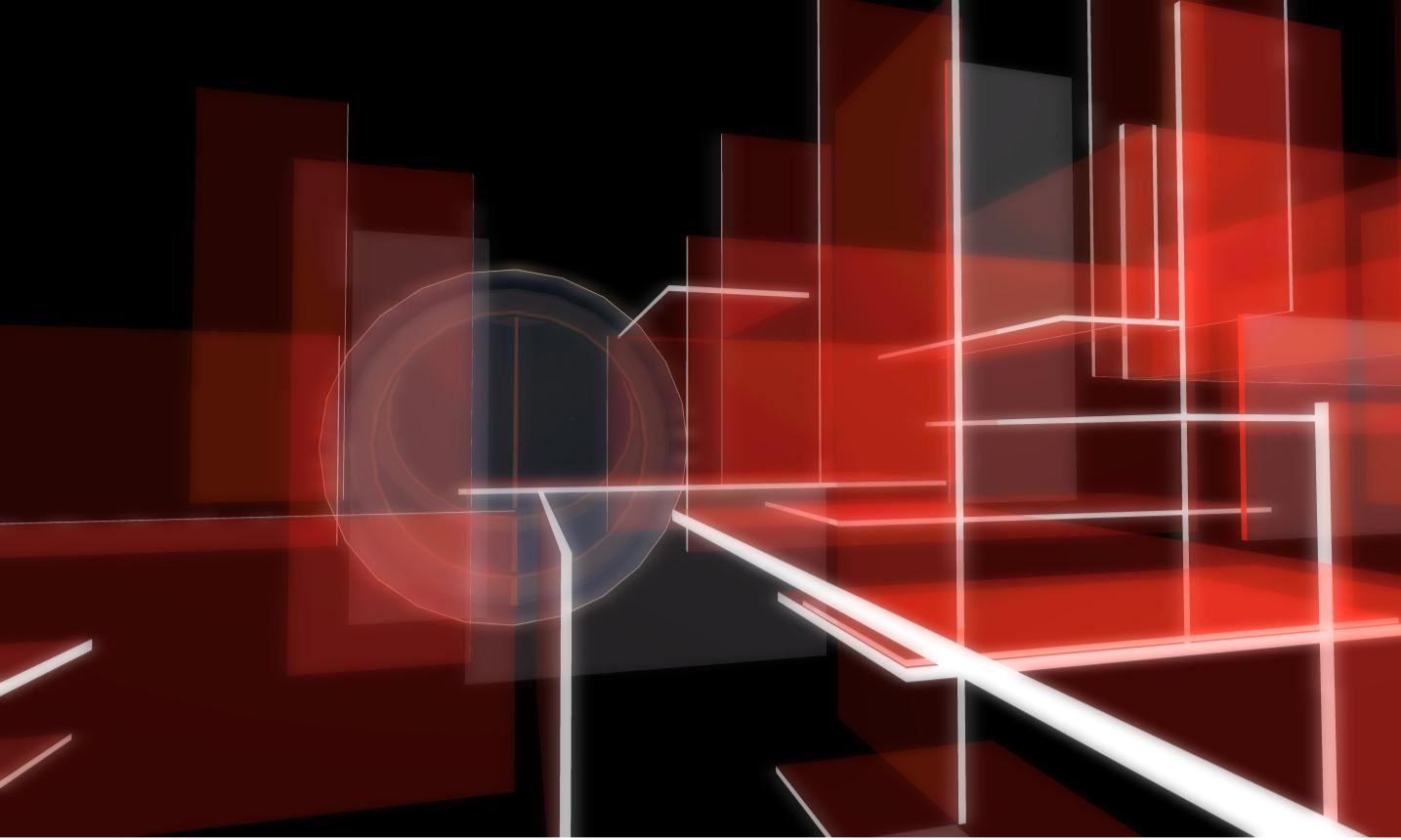
use words not really existing in a clear way, a meaning that many will not set into the place I am. Maybe you look in the Urban Dictionary. Then you find at position No. 42: "when someone is mad or insane then the person feels triggered." But there are 41 different ones. But rendered? A word in terms of Silva Mind Control, Wittgenstein or Pythonon I use to gain new insights by leaving a trace you can't leave but I am not here to teach. I am here to make you long to go there, to give you a feeling of ... understanding the universe of Gem Preiz.

Is what you see, room by room, just a

calculation of numbers and arithmetic transformations, pure math? Are the works made out of parts, of slices brought to a collage together like a cut and paste and then Photoshoped -- as if you make a cut-out poem when you play with words? Has Gem edited the universe to make it look great for the way we get overwhelmed by beauty? I leave it open. Jami will give the answer in her interview with Gem.

I have to give credit that Gem Preiz makes things visual, where I am stuck in concepts. When I say that Cyberphoria, an avatar, is the most beautiful women ever, as she is created





in our brain in the moment you meet her, then I don't need to create her. I can just bring a great body, dressed in the ways the eyes of the admirer are kept focused on her form, her shape, then find some hair ... and shoes. Yeah, you get it. I write from a man's perspective, but at *No Frontiers* it is all here: the universe. You see, you hear, you feel; you are inside the world. Immersivia at its finest. It is very supportive that you sit in a bubble so you can drift, and see the rooms befitting the art – each room “is” the art. Sometimes you really get this impression. The room makes the art work. But is this not the same when you go to an exhibition or in a gallery of some reputation? The way the work is curated, set in place makes the deal. The atmosphere where you drift, the light, the shadows, the elements. The coffee shop where you talk later on. Sure you got my words - - drift from virtual to real and back. That's the definition of feeling immersed in art. The Stendhal Syndrome - I wrote on this in rez. You will find kinetic

objects, moving, rotating, interacting, drifting, never intrusive, supportive for your experience. No Frontiers.

Art reception by avatars, avatars looking at art and the human behind the screen looking at the avatar who looks

at the art- -- then takes a photo of his own reflection of what *No Frontiers* shows. Avatarkunst, a term I once set in place. The art reception changes when you see yourself in the bubble sitting in a third person view. You immerse more easily in an art installation with a body, a face, a voice as if you have a plain 3D world just filled with objects and you are operating a camera. So I talk, I chat to Jami and we move on. Words are all said: Wow, great, another room I like. Questions come up. How is it made?

Can it be so realistic? It looks like a city, a town, a machine, a factory, a planet, a space cruiser, a supernova, a grail. Are all these fractals? If this is so, then what are we? Fractals? Ah, yes. We are avatars. LOL, but we spoke of us behind the screen. Are we also? Seen by others who let us play like we do play the avatars at the beginning of this age I call the Digital Anthropocene. Avatars right now being steered by pressing arrow keys and

Page-UP/Page-Down buttons on the keyboard and not by thoughts like it will be on the next level? I don't like to be controlled by the thoughts of others, but maybe I made this setting for me and now I smile seeing Art Blue typing and do the thumbs up, hopefully up and not down. *No Frontiers*. Artificial Life, Artificial Intelligence, Big Data knowing more about us than our friends do, predicting the next steps. My steps.

I watched the process of making fractals some years ago very closely. When a student comes in my lab and wants to do new media, digital art (or whatever it is called) to step into the art by using computers, then I suggest using a ready-to-go program for generating something for fun. A few days or weeks later, I saw the potential to work on in this or in that way. In 2008, my ex-student, Art Eames, started his ways with fractals. We finally had some exhibitions in virtual worlds and in real galleries, presenting his art circle *Genesis* and parts of "I in 3D." Art models looking at fractals and talking about them. We rented the best looking models at these times. The chat dialog we offered in voice, to listen with the pictures. Social art in a virtual world. Art Eames has now a LEA AIR grant – *Infinite Drifters* at LEA28. Climbing up the tower there up to 3,800 meters, you find a Stargate made by Shana Deed where you can dial to *No Frontiers* and teleport to Gem Preiz LEA16. The universe is a

circle, or let's say an ellipse. I hope for some more ellipses (...to get filled in) by Gem Preiz. Sailing in an Alcubierre drive to Byzantium? There are no frontiers, just take the trip.

That is no country for old men. The young

In one another's arms, birds in the trees

– Those dying generations – at their song,

The salmon falls, the mackerel crowded seas,

Fish, flesh, or fowl, commend all summer long

Whatever is begotten, born, and dies.

Caught in that sensual music all neglect

Monuments of unageing intellect.

An aged man is but a paltry thing,

A tattered coat upon a stick, unless

Soul clap its hands and sing, and louder sing

For every tatter in its mortal dress,

Nor is there singing school but studying

Monuments of its own magnificence;

And therefore I have sailed the seas and come

To the holy city of Byzantium.

O sages standing in God's holy fire

As in the gold mosaic of a wall,

Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre,

And be the singing masters of my soul.

Consume my heart away; sick with desire

And fastened to a dying animal

It knows not what it is; and gather me

Into the artifice of eternity.

*Once out of nature I shall never take
My bodily form from any natural thing,
But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths
make*

*Of hammered gold and gold
enamelling*

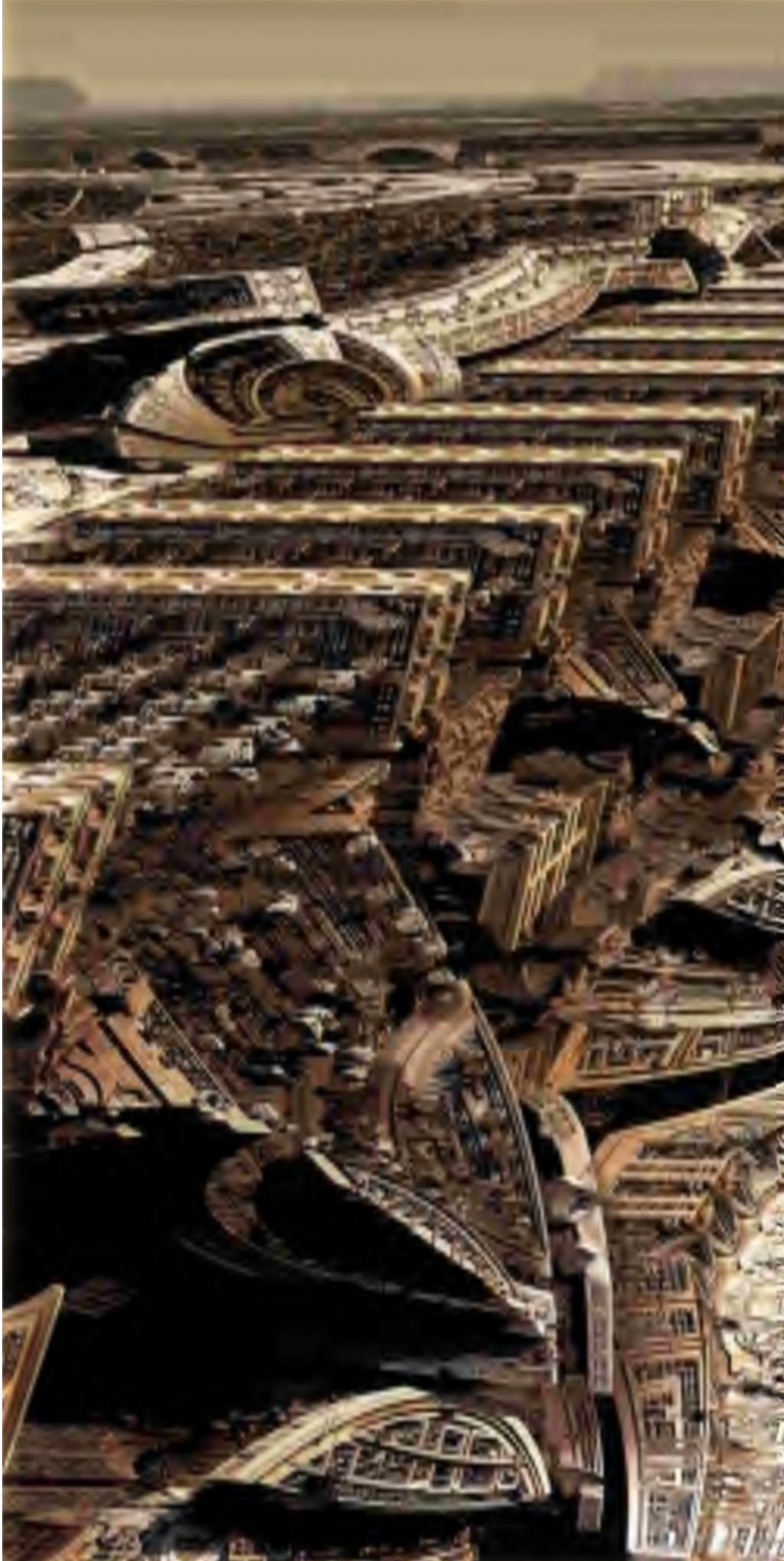
*To keep a drowsy Emperor awake;
Or set upon a golden bough to sing
To lords and ladies of Byzantium
Of what is past, or passing, or to come.
Sailing to Byzantium*

by William Butler Yeats, first
published 1928

* * *

Ah - - before I forget. I asked Ray Blue, the historian, to find Gem Preiz in a former life and to report. Just in time before I sent my text to Jami for the next issue of *rez*, I got it and here it comes ...

Hello Art. I found him. Was not so difficult. You gave me his birthday, which made it easy. He is a level 22 so I could skip 96% of the population. He is a Sagittarius who tends to keep the zodiac for generations so I set another 1 to 12 filter. Within the remaining score, only 61,790 persons matched. It was an easy go to run over him and to detect him in the historic database. From year 1195 on, he was a cloth maker in the city of Colmar. It was said the fabrics he made had magic. When a woman brought a dress, then the structure was fitting seamless on her



body no matter what body type she had. The stunning thing is that at this time, there were no computers to vary the texture ratio and repetition pattern so the prims would match, just by using sliders. I was sneaking in his workshop and found out he made the textures in slightly different sizes but



presented always just the standard size in his shop. So it looks at the market that he was just an ordinary fabrics maker, cloth maker and merchant. When it came to a custom order, he took measures and then he took the best fitting one. Using a special mixture of liquid, he could finally

stretch a fabric a little. So there has been never a seam really distorting the picture. You may remember paula cloudpainter, once featured in rez, who used the same technique on clouds in the virtual sky.

I'm sure you'd like to know how

Gem's story proceeded, so I made a little jump forward. In 1227, he refused to sell his business, as the city got special rights granted. Finally, as his hidden stock was found, he was not paying taxes. He got imprisoned. He was sentenced to death by use of the later so-called Guillotine. You may know in 1220 such an apparatus was mentioned in the books of the Holy Grail. But a lady for whom Gem made some great costumes in the past stole from a guard the key at a moment he was distracted and he escaped! Gem's son moved to the city of Avignon, where he developed some gadgets for construction. The genealogy looks like he might be reborn as an engineer with some visions coming up in your time. Has he already rezzed or is he still stuck in real? As I said, he is a 22 -- you know what it means.

Enclosed you find my bill. I needed to drink some wine in Colmar; otherwise my coverage as a merchant coming from Paris would have been discovered. Every merchant was drinking at these times. Take care, Art. You may pay me in Artacoin or in Lindens.

Editor's Note: What follows is an insightful interview with the artist himself, Gem Preiz, who sat with us for this wonderful, in-depth interview.

rez: Hi Gem. Let's do as Art Blue suggested in his story.

Gem Preiz : Hello and thank you for interviewing me.

rez: First of all, congratulations on your great built. Art wrote a story "NO FRONTIERS - Understanding the Universe," but I have to say I didn't understand a thing; just one fact made me wonder if this is all true. He told as a side link that you were born in the zodiac sign Sagittarius, the region of the space where our galaxy's black hole is located. You made one at the end of the travel in LEA16. Is this the deeper meaning of your work?

Gem Preiz : Difficult to evoke the Universe without mentioning black holes, which are perhaps the origin and the end of all. But before everything gets swallowed into black holes, we still have lot of time to explore and discover.

rez: So true. I am sure our readers would like to know more about the fractal generation and selection process. For example, how can it be that such structures come up by chance?

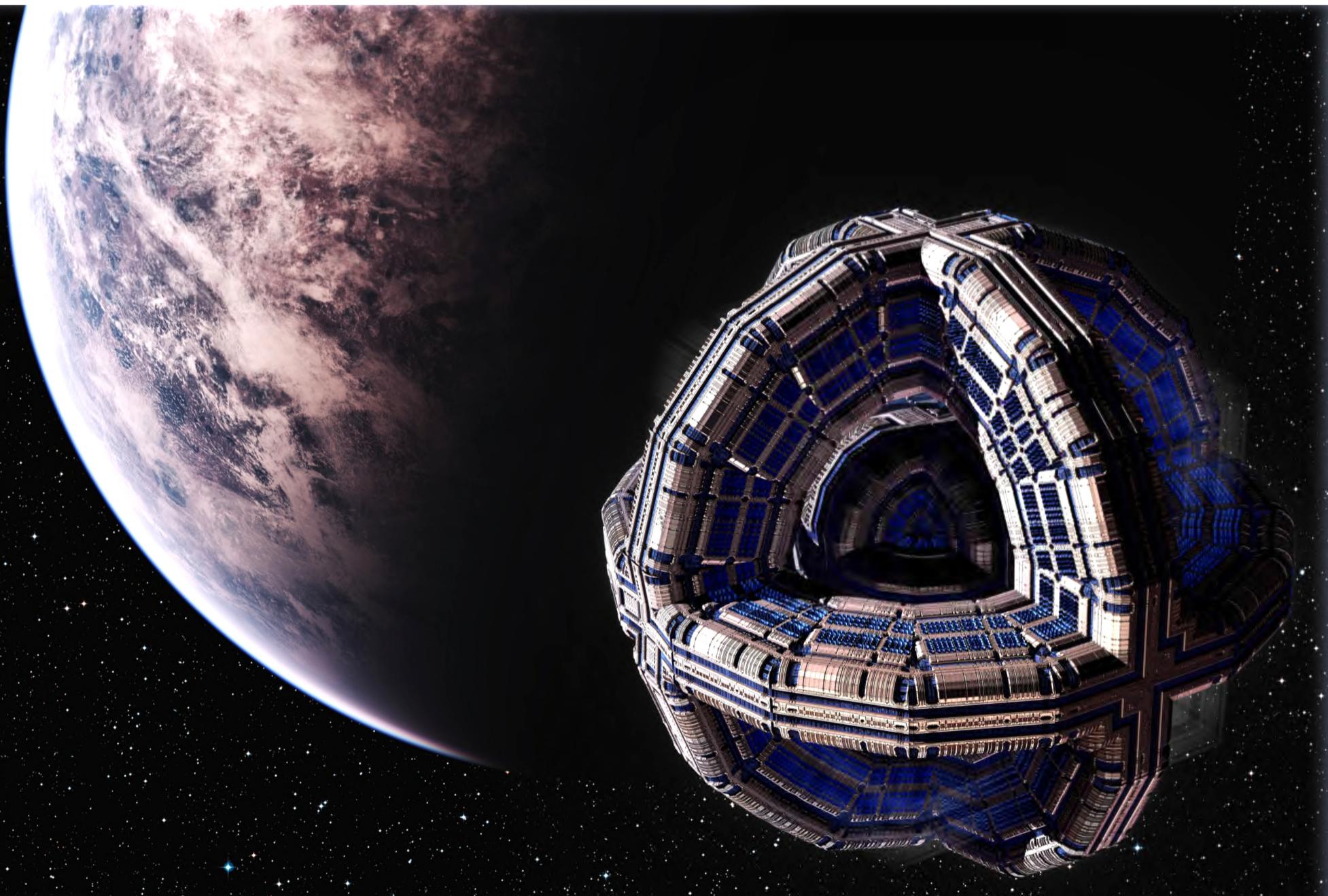
<http://i.imgur.com/FKjXw9s.png>

Gem Preiz: I use Mandelbulb 3D, which is an open source program. It contains an extensive library of functions or algorithms generating fractal objects, and enables the user to combine them ad infinitum. Each function needs the input of some

parameters and the calculation itself requires definition of other data (precision of step calculation, number of iterations, etc.) so that it multiplies again the number of possibilities and the diversity of renderings. Once the object is defined, the user can navigate around, inside, zoom or step back ... focus on details, etc. ... and play with a large range of effects (colours, light angles, shadows, fogs, etc.).

from pressing some buttons?

Gem Preiz: The fractal object is like the ultra-complex solution of a mathematical equation (not really an equation because it is the result of an iterative process) and no one can predict exactly what will get out of the done combination and from the set of parameters. Thanks to experience, the user knows which kind of object he



rez: I see. Stochastics don't result in such a meta-structure. Is it similar to a musician playing a piano? A person with no knowledge of the instrument might say it's pure magic music comes

will obtain, depending of the functions he combines: geometrical; chaotic; curvy; very detailed or not; cubic; spherical; etc., etc. But once you have chosen the style of fractals you want to

get, the level of detail you would like, and chosen therefore the type of functions you will use in combination, there is at that step some empiric approach.

rez: The example of the piano might not work so well. Let's compare what you do with a nature photographer.

Gem Preiz: Yes, my approach is similar to the one of a photographer who decides where he will explore and make photos, depending of the style of landscapes he prefers, either rocky mountains, forests or seashores. But then, I have no idea of what I will see behind the next hill. I know I will see something smooth, or something rocky, but each set of parameters I input is a new surprise.

rez: So you select areas where it's good and some where you want another round or take another view in focus?

Gem Preiz: Indeed. For example, when I wanted to create cubic patterns, for the surreal cube, I picked some functions which I knew would produce cubic patterns and tested many sets of parameters to get various results. Among them, I selected the one more interesting on which I worked, testing small variations until I got something really satisfying. Obtaining a good fractal object is the technical step, but then comes the "artistic" phase, when you play, as a photographer would, on colours, contrasts, shadows, light

angles, framing, etc., so that you create a "landscape," or an atmosphere, and at the end make your fractal tell a story. Let's illustrate it: if you look at my profile pic on Facebook you will see a fractal. Let's zoom in on it:

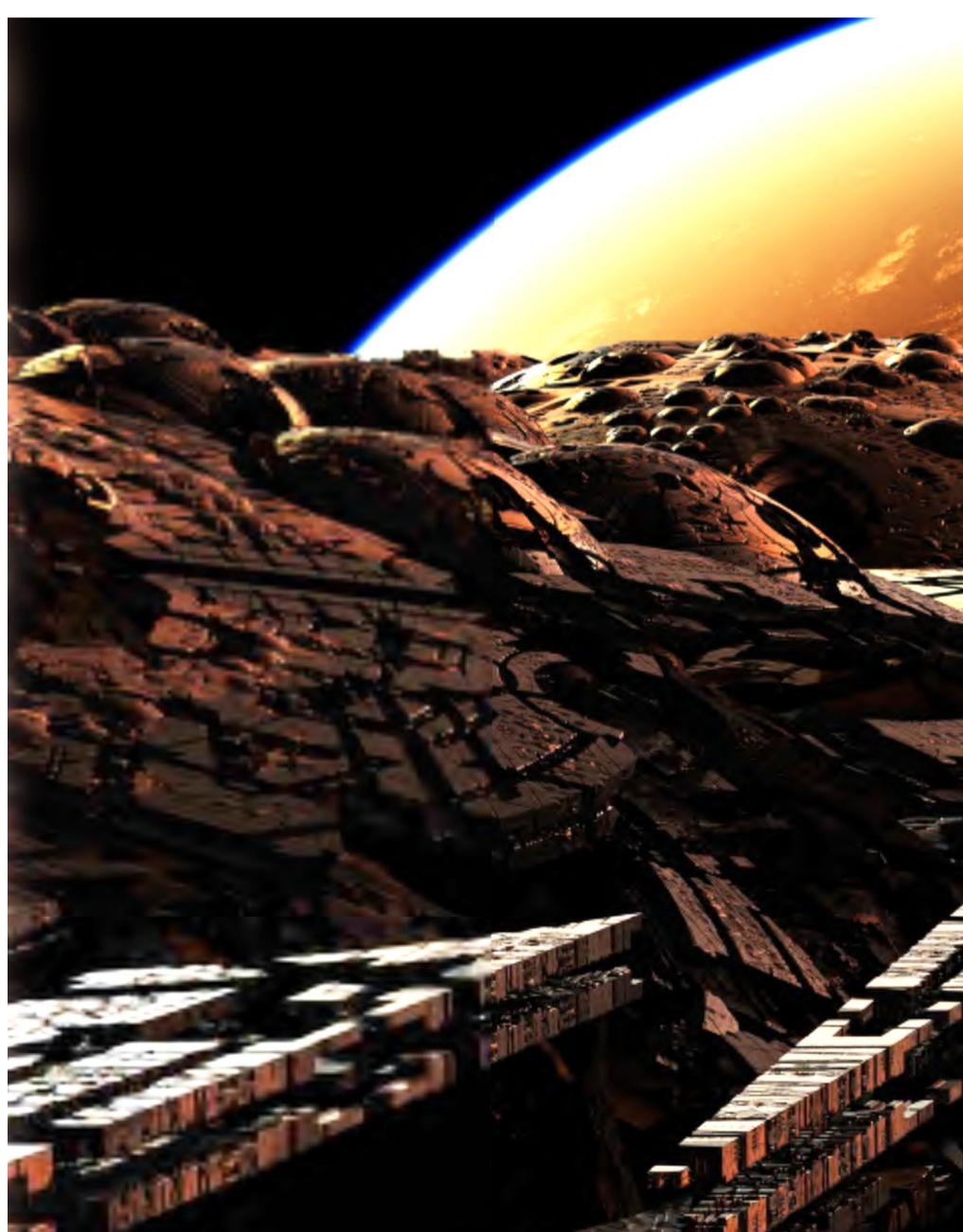
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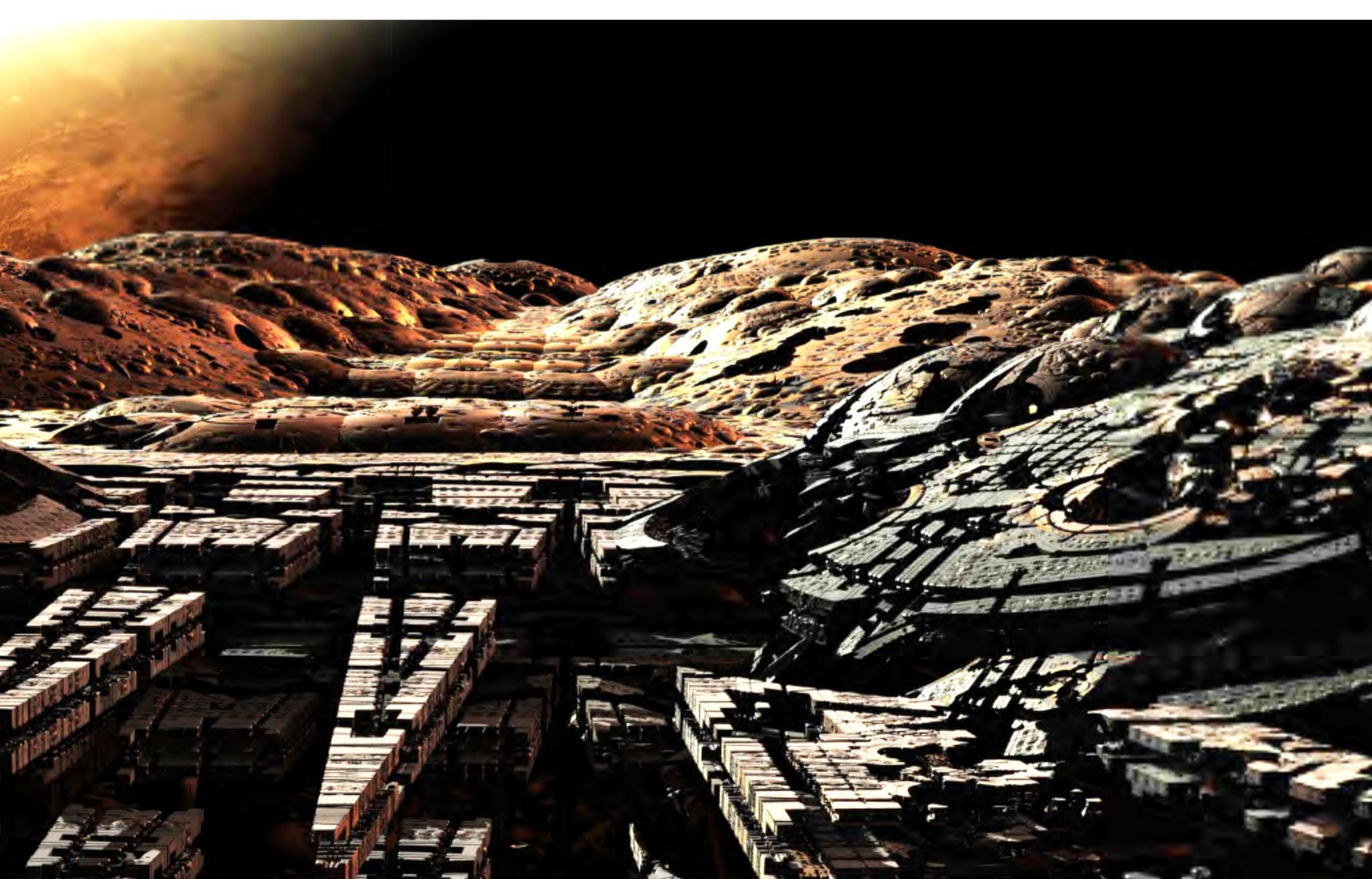
The first four gyazo are my profile pic with progressive zoom to show the area that I explored more in detail and from which I made the image for the exhibition. The last gyazo, which is the "No Frontiers" seventh frame is in fact a detail of the object seen on my profile pic, under another angle, lower one, and with different range of colours.

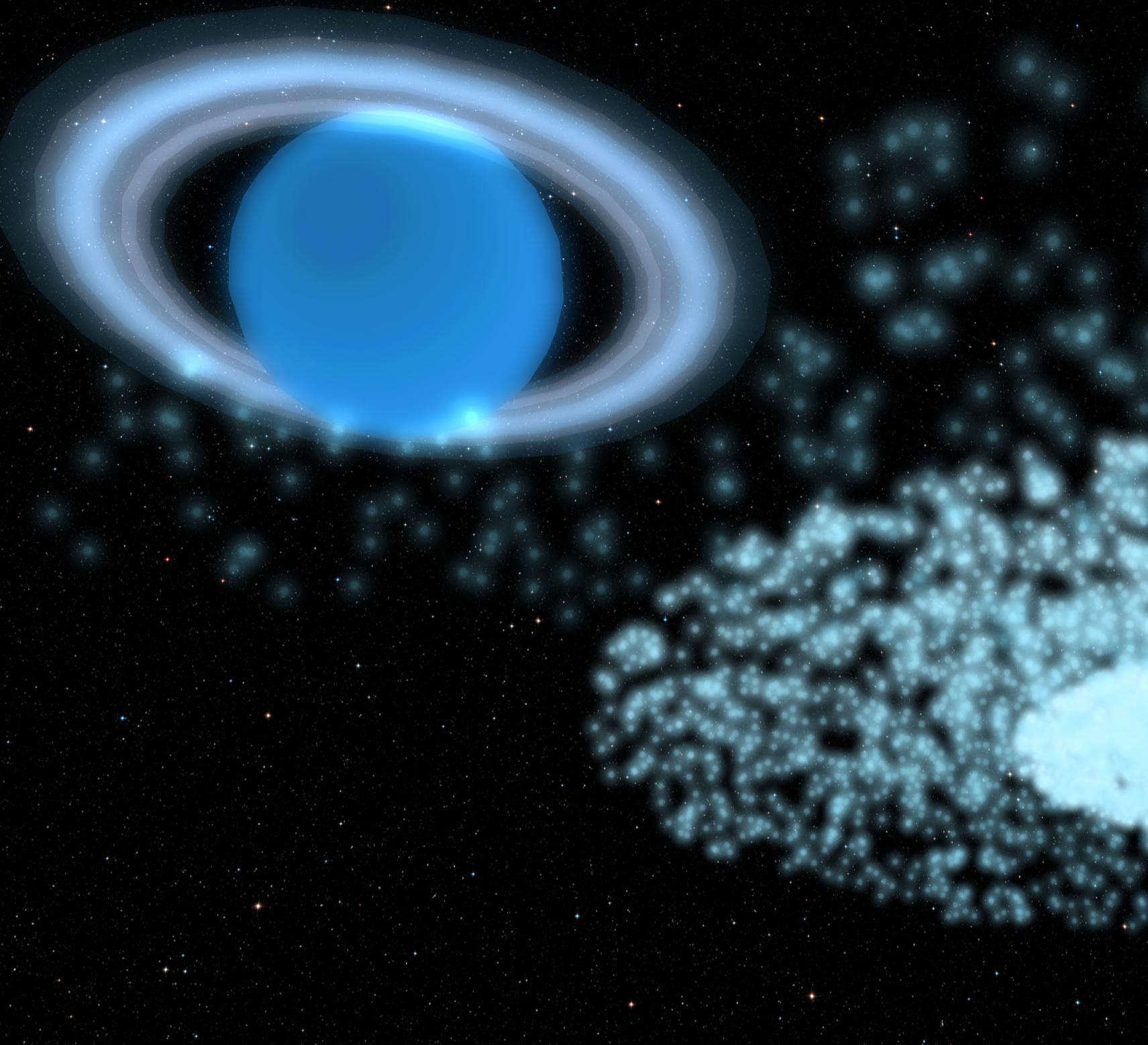
rez: How many runs do you do? Do you produce several and then select from them one fractal to show the audience? In other words how many tries end up in the trash bin?

Gem Preiz: It really depends. I work continuously on defining fractal objects, of which many won't end in

anything but garbage. From a gross object to a finalized image, ready to be exhibited, it can take several days of framing, colouring, etc. the short sized work image, plus the calculation of the large sized image (full run calculation for 12,000 pixels wide can last up to 24 hours, nonstop). It happened that I made 20 versions of a fractal in colours or shadows before I got something I was happy with. Overall, to give you an idea, since I started exhibiting on SL (October 2012), I had an exhibition every three months, with around 15 fractals. And I worked almost full time on it.

rez: Full time you say. That's true passion and endurance. Do you give the software some basic images to work with as an additional input, or





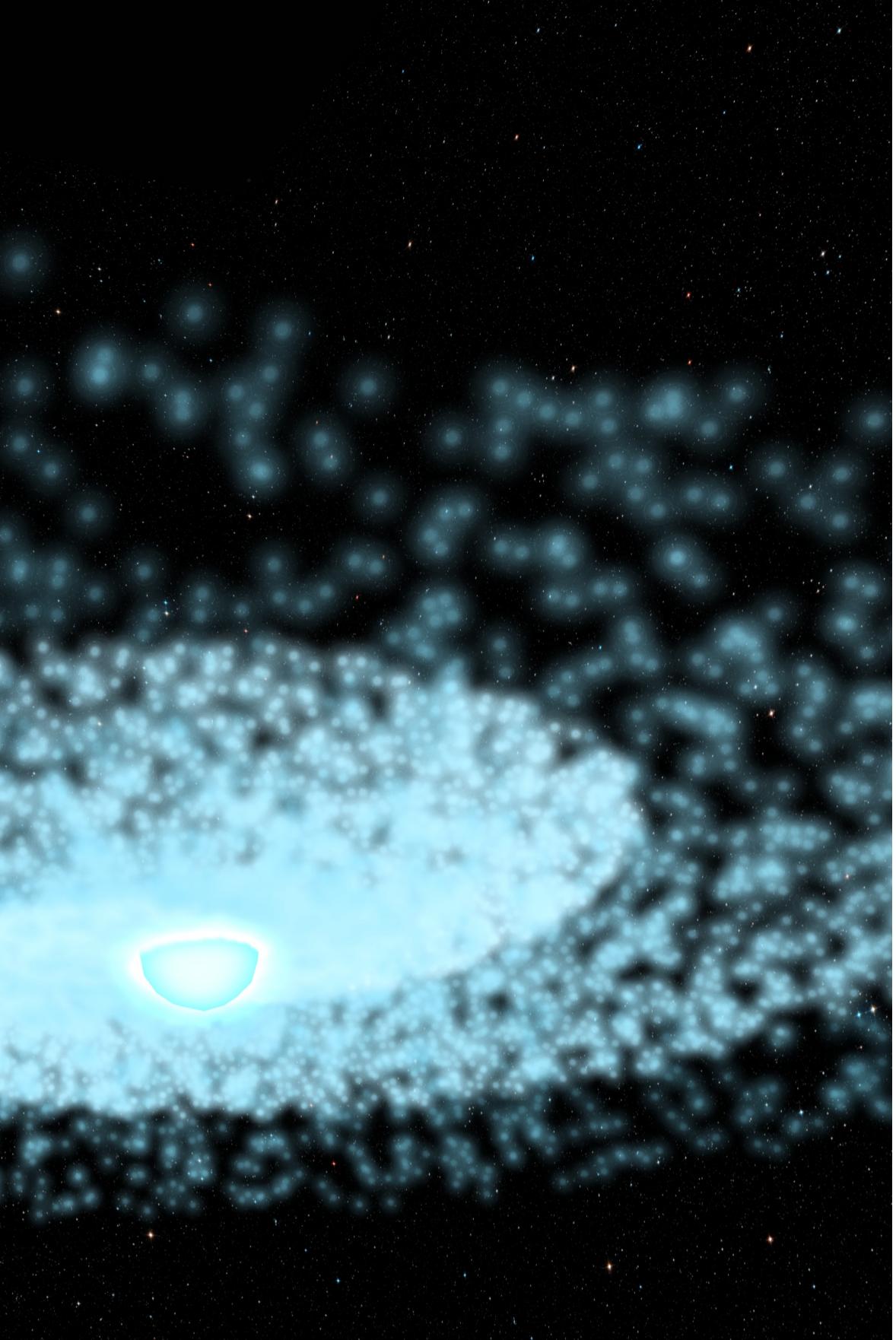
combine different images?

Gem Preiz: No, the fractal itself is generated from scratch, not as a deviation of an existing picture, and combining different objects is very difficult; however, I sometimes use background external images, like the starry skies or planets in some of the *No Frontiers* frames.

rez: So, it's not as though I would put

some Mondrian elements in and know it will come out quite Mondrian-like when I have the stochastic process applied?

Gem Preiz: This is not a fractal filter processed on an image, as some exist on Photoshop. The object is really the solution of the math equation or iteration process. You're right about the Mondrian example.



rez: Art has sent a time traveler into the past bringing back a picture of fabrics and a dress maker. How do you like it (and don't say just you do - laughs)? He might have wondered, as many readers did, why the objects, the fractals handshake so much - - like a dress fitting on a body - - in the different installations of No Frontiers, fitting as a known reality for the mind.

Gem Preiz: I hope it is because I succeed in making them "evoke" something. I try more and more to avoid hangings, and to display a series of images which tell a story or illustrate a topic, so that the spectator is not facing frames one by one, but progresses from a start until a conclusion. But I think it is also because fractal patterns look familiar to our eyes, as Nature often shows fractal-like structures, and even human activities do, especially in architecture, urbanism, or even design.

rez: What's next? Any further projects?

Gem Preiz: I will likely use the LEA16 for a second or complementary exhibition in April or early May. I am currently already working on it. And perhaps something "Surreal," meanwhile (winks).

rez: That's fantastic. On the other hand, give the readers of rez some time to visit No Frontiers as it is. Thank you Gem for the interview. All the best. May the Alcubierre drive be with you.

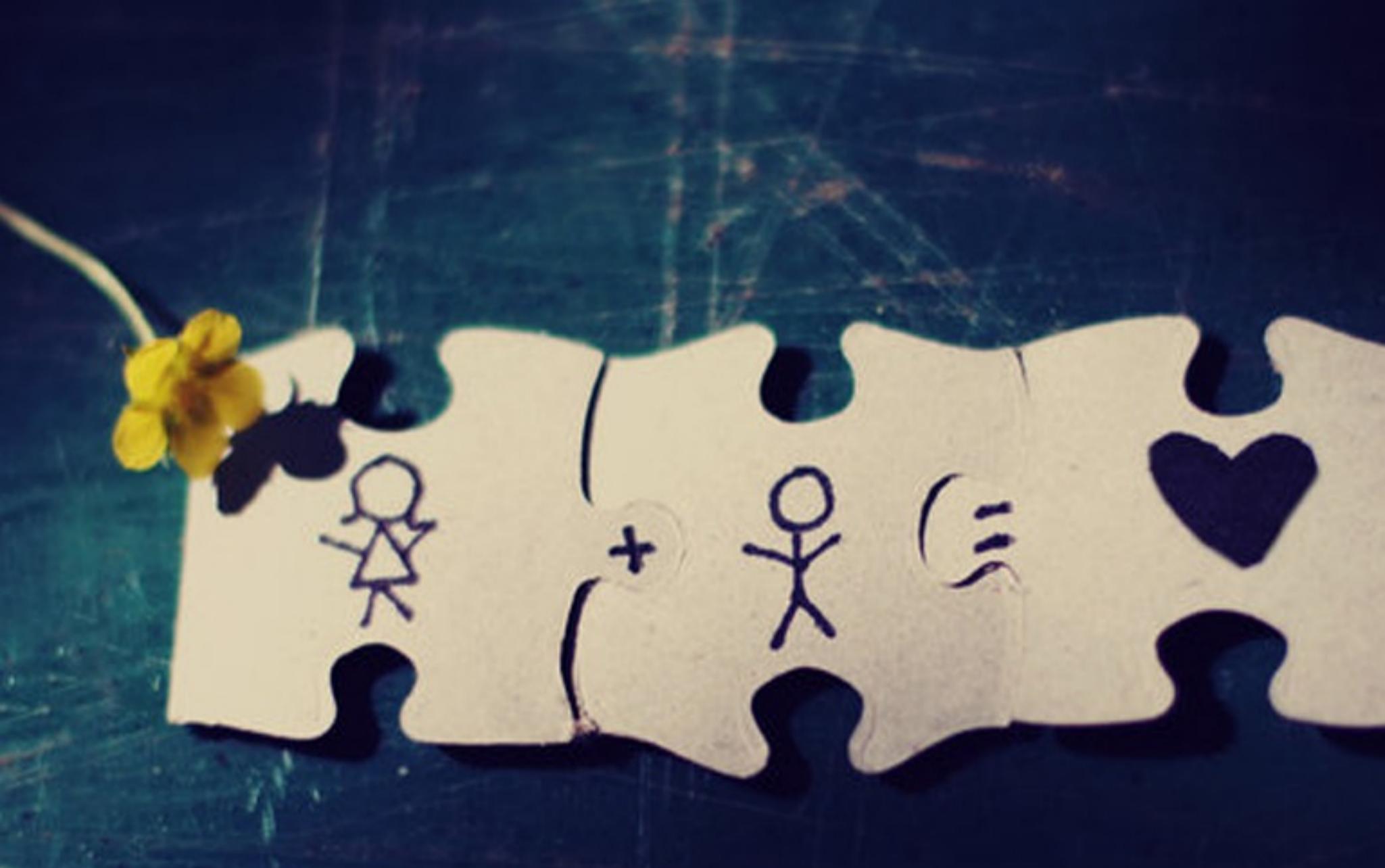
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photography



j a m i
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When you squiggle to complete it's sitting displaced sense. You that once No direction until you to settle. You are twisting A smile corner of and delight. This is w

THIS IS HOW MEROPE MADRIGAL

- for Julie and Mariner

you find that piece of jigsawed
pieces and unusual pattern
to complete the puzzle of living
sitting in a bathtub and realizing
the moment. Eureka! It all makes
you are whole. A complete entity
you stumbled around chaos.
no direction, no purpose, no hope
until you glimpsed the perfect bit
into the void near your heart
and were satisfied. No more bitter mood
you mouth into a frown.
graces your lips, the outer
edge of your eye so that laughter
ought shape the face of animation
what forever looks like.

Tomorrow when you wake
and understand complete is spelled
with your lover's name, sharing
is larger than an idea. It is a life
sustained by giving more, taking
less and offering all. Your blood
sings anthems to love, a melody
exquisite, the touch of harmony
a shiver over those places embraced
by truth. No more doubt since you
moved past this and found trust
in the way you look to one another.
Such deep care and understanding
carries your hymn through sleep
and tomorrow begins fulfilled,
happy, and rested. Woken
to a richer passage of time.
This is how forever love feels.





Tales of the City: Reimagining London

Cassie Parker

As I opened my eyes on the morning of January 1, 2017 my mind started to race. Seemingly “just another day,” today was the day I had looked forward to for more than two weeks. Today was the day I was to take possession of LEA10 which had been assigned to me in mid-December after being selected as one of twenty artists selected as Land Grant recipients in the twelfth round of the Linden Artist-in-Residence grant cycle. I use the term “artist” extremely loosely ... in fact, I’ve only worn the tag twice to date. While I’ve spent much of my life as an artist, over the past several seasons I’ve focused more and more on nurturing talent than on my own personal artistic statements.

Those of you that have followed me in the pages of *rez magazine* know that, my own personal passion has shifted from performing on stage to helping others realize their dreams of self-expression through their own personal artistic mediums. Not long ago, talking to a long-time friend and colleague from the world of theatre and television who is just beginning to transition into semi-retirement I paused for a moment when she spoke of the passion she feels when she teaches and mentors a young performer.

She said, “Following that last performance on Broadway, I feel full ... there is nothing left that I feel I have

to prove to myself or to anyone in the world. Now I’m energized and invigorated by my work with young artists and students. It’s time to give back to my art form.” What a delightful state. Satiated beyond belief and wanting for nothing artistically. I’m grateful to be in similar circumstances. Supporting others and watching their art grow has become the great joy of my life – embraced in both physical and virtual settings on a daily basis.

My talent then, is to serve as a sounding board – to listen and to participate whenever asked in whatever way I possibly can, but always in a supporting role. You can see, I hope, my reluctance in wearing the LEA artist tag given to me. LEA10 will not be about me or about my art. Rather, it will be a collaboration led, mostly, by Chrissy Rhiano who has done an absolutely superb job as the architect of the sim and of the project that lies ahead.

And so, on the morning of January 1, still lying in bed, I found my mind racing; excited and energized – eagerly anticipating what the day would bring and remembering dozens of projects, performances and productions from the past. Remembering those past first days of rehearsals, of signing a new contract, or of stepping off an airplane into a city where you’d never been and

into the welcoming arms of colleagues you had never worked with before nor ever even met. I slid from the covers and quickly dressed and headed out to witness the sunrise on LEA10. I had visited the sim a couple days earlier to examine the scope of my predecessor's art project and to get a sense and a feeling of the land, but as I landed all that was once there was cleared. I landed on a vast openness. An expanse

the stuff art is made of. . . Intuitively I began to take a few photographs. The only sound for meters, was the sound of the shutter, click clicking as I began to document the evolution of a sim. I remember musing about the Robert Frost poem, and hearing the words distinctly in my mind. "But I have promises to keep, and miles to go before I sleep, and miles to go before I sleep." I collected myself and scooted

I stood and surveyed the vast space of open nothingness and marveled at the blank canvas that lay before me...

This is the stuff dreams are made of.

This is the stuff art is made of.

of green on the Southeast corner of the continent resembling the American great plains. . . except it was surrounded on two sides by the open sea.

I stood. Alone. I stood and surveyed the vast space of open nothingness and marveled at the blank canvas that lay before me. These are the moments I most relish. Sitting alone in a dark, empty theatre, or alone in the dark - backstage before a performance, staring at an empty page of paper, or (in this case) standing alone in the middle of a field and dreaming of what might be - of what WILL be. This is the stuff dreams are made of. This is

back to TerpsiCorps Isle and then off to the real world until I could show Chrissy later in the day.

The original plan for the sim came from a conversation we had had shortly after Halloween. As we were brainstorming about future performances for TerpsiCorps ARTWerks, Chrissy introduced the idea of a show based on Penny Dreadfuls. While I had a working knowledge of the genre, I had not been a viewer of the recent television show exploring the topic, and I hadn't thought of the literary genre in years – other than the theatrical collisions I often had with *Sweeney Todd*. Still, my



knowledge of *Sweeney* gave me the parameters I needed to work with – a framework rooted in the works of Charles Dickens and John Gay, the reworked dreadfuls by the likes of Stephen Sondheim, Hugh Wheeler and the works of Bertolt Brecht. That morning, while I waited to show Chrissy the space, I was literally itching to get started. My mind was continually reeling with memories of *Sweeney*, of *The Flying Dutchman*, of *Oliver Twist*, of *The Beggar's Opera* and *The Threepenny Opera*. I still hadn't "bought" the land from the Linden Endowment, but I couldn't wait to begin. . .

In Earlier conversations with Chrissy, we had talked ourselves into the notion that, since it was New Year's, it was likely that we wouldn't be able to take possession of the sim until the

following day, but later that afternoon, my LEA liaison, Dove contacted me with an official packet of info from the Endowment. We met briefly on the site and I officially purchased the sim. A few hours later I walked the sim again, this time with Chrissy as we (she) began to lay out the vision for the sim.

While I had been surveying the sim earlier in the day, Chrissy had been doing her homework - researching Victorian London, Whitechapel and the Thames river that separates the two. By the time we met up on the evening of January 1, she had more than a firm vision in mind; she had a plan of action. The conversation from Chrissy's end went something like this:

OK, so I spent tonight doing research and thinking.

We will do two shows in the LEA sim while we have it, but both will be on the same build.

We're going to split London down the middle with a river. One side will be Whitechapel, the other Downtown Victorian London.

We'll build theaters on each side. The Penny Dreadful show will be in the Whitechapel theater.

Whitechapel is where the Jack the Ripper murders happened, and we'll have little vignettes of each of them in the build.

We will have a couple bridges across the river for people to travel back and forth.

I want artists . . . lots of artists.

The downtown London part will be industrial revolution London, and instead of Factory Row, we will have artistry row. There will be a whole row of factory buildings and warehouses. Each of them will house a different artist's gallery.

Once we open the sim to the public, we'll want to encourage a steady stream of visitors for the entire time we have the sim.

We want to have story readings in a Victorian gazebo at the central traffic circle in Downtown London.

We want to have a group of volunteer docents regularly wandering the sim as tour guides, dressed in period appropriate costumes.

The two grand theaters we build should



have concerts in them too, when we can schedule them.

We should have a full event schedule, including special gallery exhibit shows where the artist is present to talk to the audience about their pieces.

And we should start planning everything immediately.

Oh, and we will want to have little cafes lining the artistry row so people can sit and talk about the galleries.

Almost immediately she separated the sim with a waterway dividing the two halves. We had a basic feel for the way the sim should look, but Chrissy had spent the morning culling and sifting through Second Life Marketplace for the infrastructure that might eventually become the building blocks of the sim. We combed through the long list of items she had found and began to acquire buildings, bridges, and roadways that would serve as the basis for our Victorian setting.

Keep in mind that the “build” of the sim is only the first step in the project. It will serve as the “container” or “vessel” that will hold the laboratory that will explore art and artistic connections between a wide variety of artistic disciplines as well as connections between the real and virtual worlds. Impressive as the sim



may be, we hope the art and the people that inhabit it will be even more impressive.

Those of you who follow me on Facebook saw immediate progress. That original packet of info from the Linden Endowment for the Arts included the following timeline:

Jan 1st 2017: AIR buys the sim which has been allotted to them for \$0 and assumes ownership.

LEA AIR Land Grant recipients meet with the liaison (the liaison will come by to meet you when you have taken possession and check that all is well).

January - Weeks 3-4

3-week progress check with liaisons:



Three weeks after the start of your residency, we will conduct a progress check. You must give evidence of reasonable progress on your project at that point.

February - Week 3

6-week progress check with liaisons:

Six weeks after the start of your residency, you are expected to have made a significant amount of progress on your project. If such evidence of progress is not provided on request by the LEA Committee at this time, your residency may be terminated.

May - Week 1

DEADLINE: Build mostly finished

(minimal tweaking) - sim should be open to the public at this stage.

Suffice it to say that we were well ahead of schedule already. By the end of the day, we had a good portion of Victorian London set, we had constructed a bridge between the two municipalities, and begun work on warehouses and other structures on the Whitechapel side of the Thames, including a warehouse that would eventually serve as the shell for a “people’s theatre” in the Whitechapel community. We combed through our combined inventories to find suitable building blocks and ended the day with almost a quarter of the sim roughed in. I remember standing on the sim as we bade each other goodnight in the typical fashion that has become ritual over time and thinking . . . “And there was evening, and there was morning -- the first day.”

By the time I arrived the following day, even more progress had been made. Much of London was plotted and a great many shops and buildings dotted the main street in Whitechapel, along with a row of warehouses along the back of the sim. As I landed (in water), I was greeted by Chrissy, replete in classic “Bob the Builder” regalia . . . yellow hard hat, yellow tank top, denim overalls, work boots and aviator sunglasses. I remember marveling at the tremendous progress that had been

made on the sim in just a few hours. When another friend (and LEA board member), JMB Balogh showed up to answer a quick question, we both mused that, while the Linden timeline specifies there should be progress within three weeks, Chrissy would likely be finished with the build in three days!

While that didn't quite happen, the progress made on the sim has been quite remarkable. After three weeks, we have two-thirds of London built and the seedier east side (the Whitechapel side) entirely built. Currently, the London side includes upper-end shops and galleries, a natural history museum, a conservatory, an arboretum, and a small chapel. Space remains for a new Victorian theatre and city park.

Now the real fun begins; decorating and filling the spaces and shops with period appropriate furnishings, finding up to two and a half dozen artists to showcase and finishing installations of artwork throughout the sim. While we hope to feature the work of established artists on site, the real point is to establish a mechanism that encourages the creation and exhibition of art from both established and emerging artists, including those who have had early successes as well as some who are just now beginning their journey into virtual art. The sim is, after all, a

laboratory for the exploration of all the arts, performance based and otherwise. Joining the ranks of our outstanding TerpsiCorps ARTWerks performing artists will be a score of visual and literary artists. So far, in addition to my own private collection, we have



secured commitments from Cat Boccaccio, Serendipity Dyrssen, Jami Mills, Alyenya Resident, Tooshy Toshi, Nils Urqhart and Myra Wildmist. Dozens more are in the works, but if you're interested in being a part of the project, I hope you'll contact us. We'll do our best to make a spot for as many worthy artists as we possibly can.

I continue to be impressed with the quality of work and the collaborative

spirit that I encounter on the grid. I realize there are those that are not good “team players,” but overall, I’m encouraged that artists on the grid, just like their colleagues in the physical world, have big, open hearts. That makes this experiment on LEA10 even



more rewarding and gratifying. I began TerpsiCorps ARTWerks with one clear goal – to give artists a supportive environment unencumbered by unnecessary rules and regulations. An environment that nurtured collaboration among all artistic disciplines. I understand artists. I understand egos. I know the difference between healthy and unhealthy egos, too, and I’m extremely proud of the artists that make TerpsiCorps

ARTWerks a part of their lives. I look forward to meeting more and more artists through this valuable project.

Finally, I hope you’ll join us on LEA10. We’re currently calling the sim Whitechapel - Victorian London. While that name might change to more clearly reflect what we’re trying to achieve on the site, I can assure you that our commitment to art, to quality, and to accessibility will remain steadfast throughout the six-month project and beyond.

Come visit. Come and explore a world unlike any other. Come be a part of the dialog. Come help us determine what art might look like in the years ahead. I think it’s an important dialog and it’s a dialog that I hope YOU will be a part of. There’s much going in the world today that is disturbing. There’s never been a better – or more import – time to be a part of the dialog. Come see us . . . Soon . . .

• r — e — z •





Safe in the Arms Of Yahweh Mariner Trilling

Safe in the arms
drinking that s
Passing the bo
relaxing 'til th

The angels are
dripping in he
The good Lor
so no worries

There's a jolly
Gabriel's rolle
Don't worry if
you'll win it b



ns of Yahweh,
sweet cheap wine.
ottle with friends long passed,
the end of time.

e grilling up some steaks
eavenly sauce.
d's buying everything
about the cost.

y dice game in the yard,
ed a ten.
f you lose your dime,
back again.

We're all drunk but there are no fights,
Just happy party folks
Grab a stool and sit right down,
Saint Peter's telling dirty jokes.

The pretty girls are getting drunk and
taking off their tops.
It's the party of salvation and
the music never stops.



We pull on our pink caps,
Hand-made woolen symbols of our flesh.
Armor for the storm.

We take to the streets,
A powerful sea, defending our right to be.

This is not about women,
Immigration, religion.
It is about our humanity.

*You will not tell me who
I will love, or not.*

*My health will not be legislated
My body will not be legislated.
My beliefs will not be legislated.*

*My right to be
Will not be legislated by dark men in stiff navy suits.*

What I hear and see,
Is not my country—

If I am angry,
Then so be it,

I have words,
I have breath—
My sisters and brothers stand with me.

You will not
Make America hate again.

MY VOICE
MY STORY
MY BODY
UNITE for



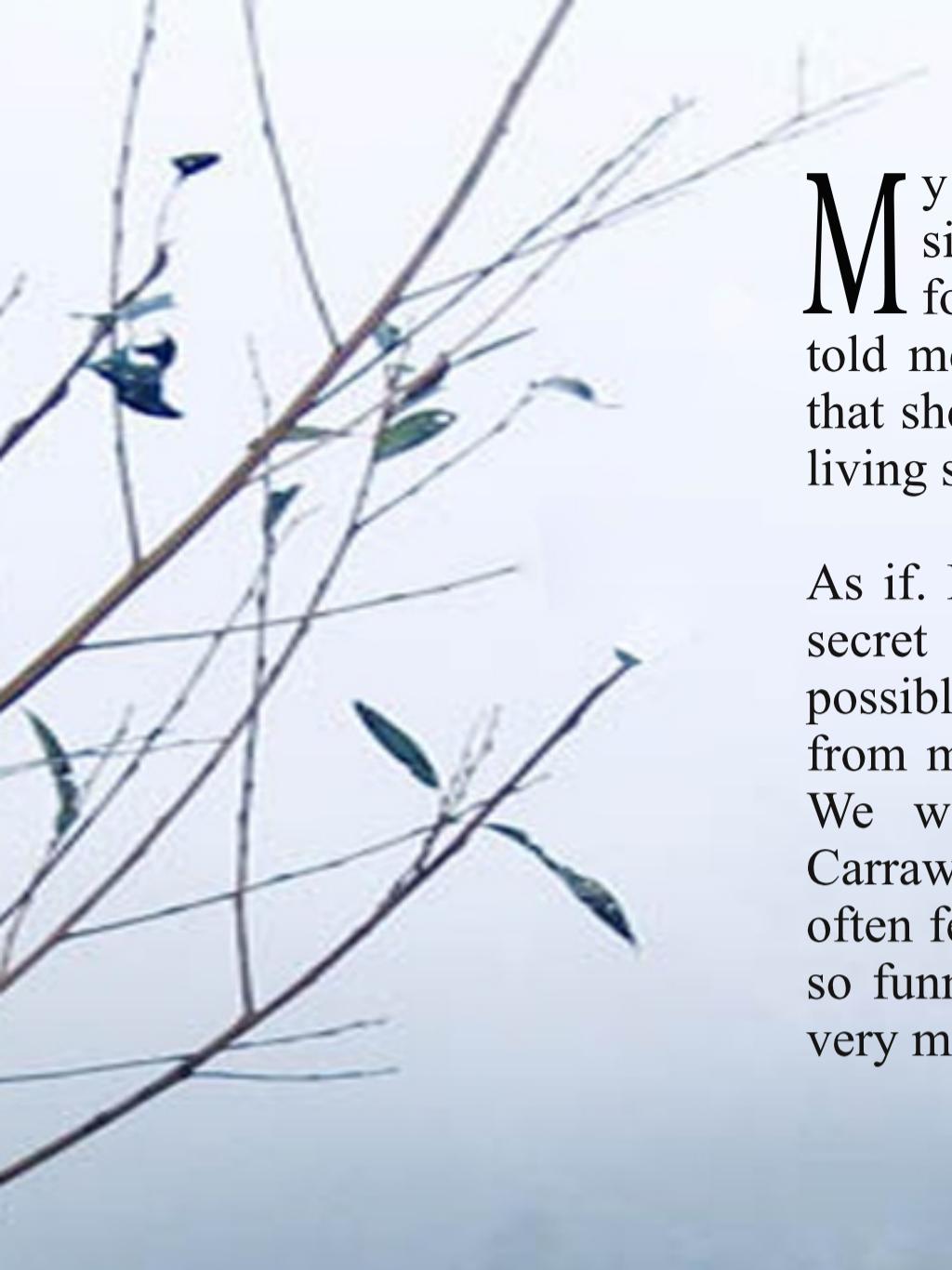
Day One
Jullianna
Juliesse



SECRETS

Cat Boccaccio

photo by Valhalla-Vania



My best friend Brenda told me a significant secret when we were fourteen. I now will tell you what she told me, weeping, over the phone one night, that she made me swear I'd never tell another living soul. Here goes...

As if. Brenda is not even her real name. The secret doesn't even matter now, except possibly to me. Brenda lived up the street from me with her parents and younger sister. We were inseparable friends, and I was Carraway to her Gatsby, in the sense that I often felt like the observer. She was so clever, so funny, so brave, and so fearless that I felt very much in awe.

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Her parents were both alcoholics. It became so serious that her father lost his job, the parents separated, and they could no longer afford the home up the street. So Brenda moved with her mother to a state-sponsored, low-income housing project, which was just as joyful as it sounds.

I would go spend the weekend there. Her mother would often get blind drunk and cry and scream into the phone for hours, possibly to Brenda's father. She joked about it to me.

There was a youth group at this housing project, for all the potential troubled delinquents, led by a social worker. The social worker organized bizarre, supervised outings to the beach. It was farcical. The "delinquents" made absolutely no connection between these surreal outings and anything meaningful in their actual lives. To them it was immersive theater.

She made new friends there; one of them, Maxine, was tall and tough and red-haired and scared the shit out of me. Sometimes she and her friends would travel by bus to my house, arriving unannounced, stand on the front lawn and call for me, and I'd go with them on their adventures, which usually involved sullen boys and smoking.

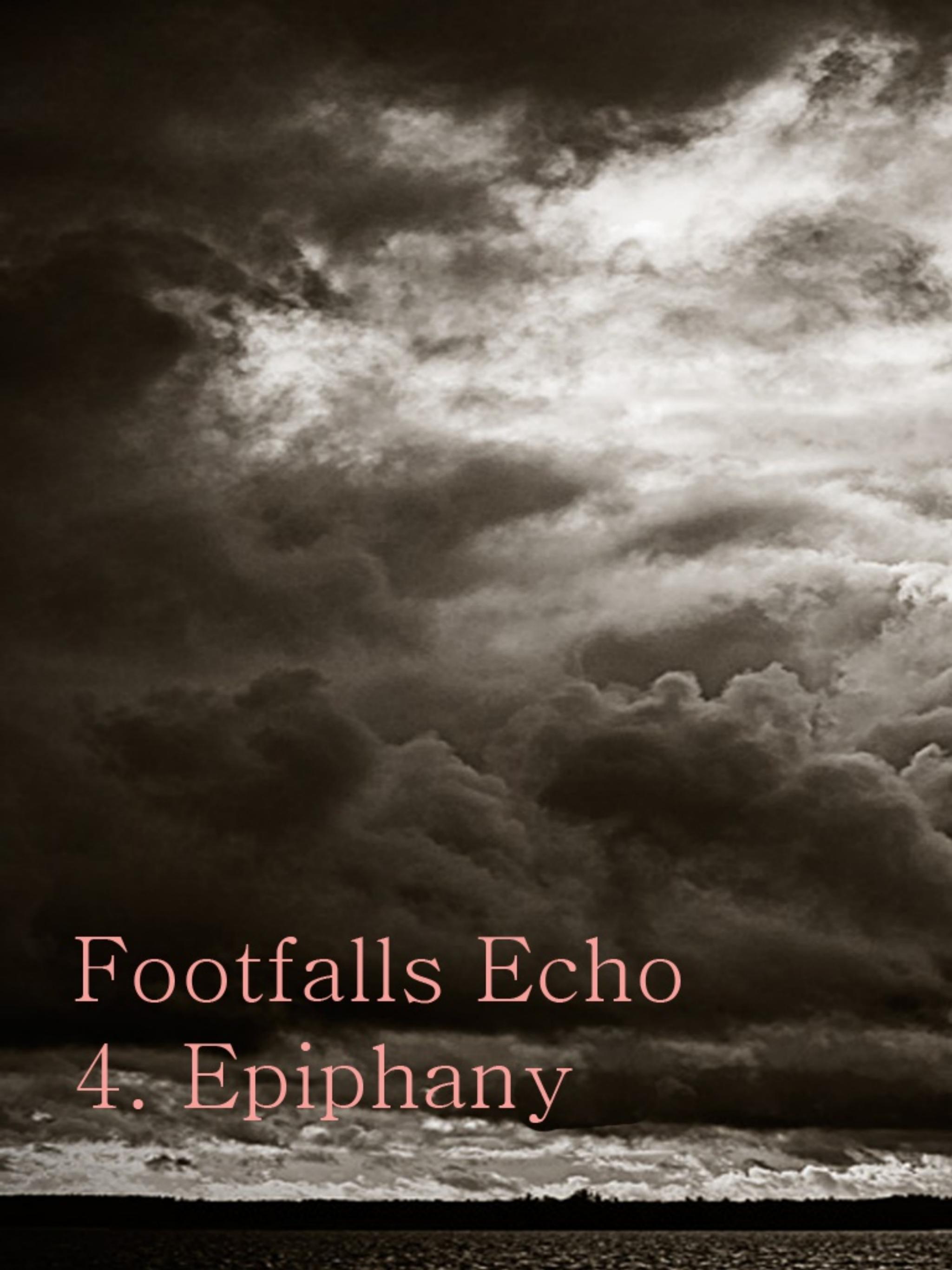
Naturally we drifted apart. I heard a little about Brenda over the years. She was addicted to heroin for a while, but recovered. She came to visit me once when we were seventeen, but in terms of experience, I was just starting to catch up with the fourteen year old Brenda. We were miles, eons, centuries apart.

Now, I suppose, we wouldn't be centuries or eons or even miles apart. I don't know where she is. I sometimes google her name, but nothing helpful comes up. I hope she and her sister are well. I hope she became someone worthy of her talent and intense love of life.

There is still one connection that we have, whatever else happens. I still hold that secret, however insignificant it is, however futile a gesture, and will forever. I won't let her down.

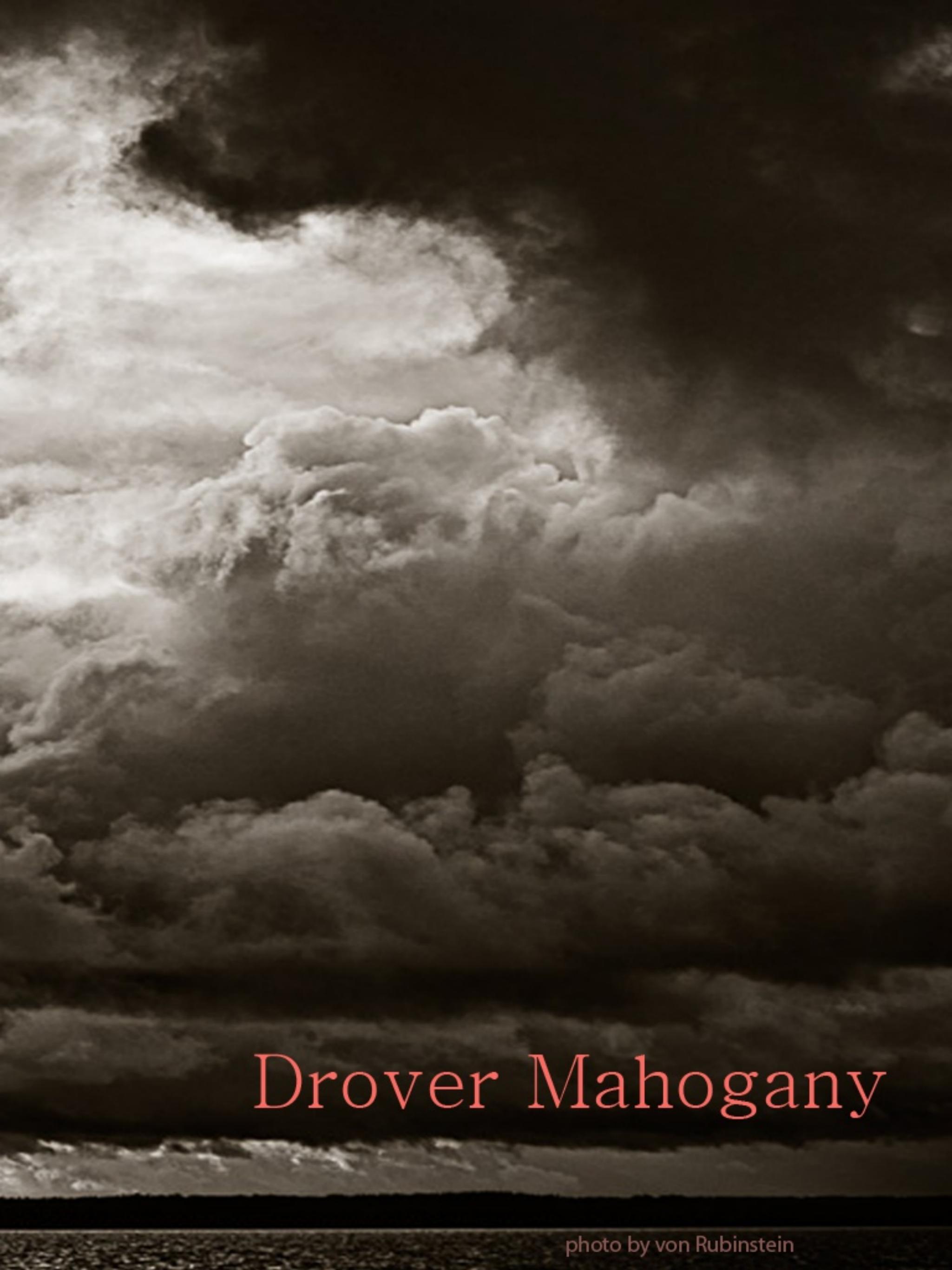
TERPSICORPS ARTWERKS





Footfalls Echo

4. Epiphany



Drover Mahogany

photo by von Rubinstein

“The magic of the street is the mingling of the errand and the epiphany.”

Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*

Walking in our nearby mountains most days led me to a digital search on walking. I came across Rebecca Solnit's acute observation. Do you wonder, like me, how you have not thought of it yourself? A magical conjunction of words indeed. Epiphanies strike you on your journey through life, unexpected, unsought for, unknowable till revealed. But what compelling force they have. In the one moment from this to the next forcing a reevaluation of all that has come before and has yet to come. They may be as wide as your life or as focused as that little task immediately at hand - such as walking.

Minor epiphanies have accompanied the walks, of course: the startling clarity of colors on a sharp blue day, the rapidly encroaching mists obliterating the mountains on a wet and windy day and the shock of the ominous shiny black shells of young shingle-back lizards almost stood upon.

Walking today I meditate on the major epiphanies in the sweep of my life. They have been conceptual, musical, revelatory, tactile or visual. I have no

trouble recalling them. They are far too vivid and life-affecting. Also too few in number, relative to my lifetime, to challenge my powers of recall. What surprises me now is how significantly they vary in their emotional tone. But since an epiphany is a moment of sudden and striking realization leading to often profound or lasting insight, perhaps it is not too surprising that the circumstances producing them may have very different emotional tenor and flavor.

Let me recount some as snapshots in chronological order. Aged 7, I moved with my family from one city to a much larger one, starting at a new school in the middle of the year. At the end of that first week, our teacher opens sliding doors to the next classroom for the last hour of the day. Two classes joined, she instructs: “It’s time for our singing lessons - the new boy will now sing for us.” I look at her astonished (I already know with absolute conviction that I cannot sing). I am totally caught unawares and shake my head. Like the scene from “The Silence of the Lambs” in which the demented dressmaker demands that the girl in the well soften her skin with lotion, the teacher reiterates: “The new boy will sing for us.” We to and fro for a bit, until she can see I will not budge.

My last hour of formal schooling there is spent with my head jammed into a

corner of the room while the unseen chorus of two classes sings around me. Years later I recall those walls pressing in on me, isolating me. I am kept in school later as further punishment. Let out, I have missed my bus home. I wait for another to arrive but none appears. My family then had no car. I walk home across a number of suburbs, when I arrive I find my parents have been waiting for 2 hours at the bus stop for me. I did not return to that school.

identify the precise hertz measurements of sounds (her skills at this having been lab-tested). I felt I was in the presence of an alien being, having powers unimaginable to me.

Seven years after I did not sing, the end of my first year at high school, I have been out for a day on the bay and around the islands with my girlfriend's family in a large cabin cruiser. Being very fair skinned and blond, the sun

**Epiphanies strike you on your journey through life,
unexpected, unsought for, unknowable till revealed.
But what compelling force they have.**

That musical epiphany is more an emotional one, certainly a life lesson. From that day, I realized I was strong enough to resist any dictates that were plain wrong or totally inappropriate. That profound insight has served me well in my life. Oh, in case you think I was being just plain mulish, I have never sung since; indeed, the only things I have failed in my life were doing the aural tests singing notes and chords in piano exams while a young graduate student in economics! I met a girl here on SL who has sung in professional opera. She told me she is blessed with perfect pitch, to such a degree that she is able infallibly to

reflecting off the water has burned me badly. My girlfriend comes down to the cabin to check on me. She lies beside me looking down at me, our first intense and intimate moment. She slips the strap of her bathers off one shoulder. For the first time I hold a female breast - a sensation of such profound and exquisite tactile perfection, it still remains with me. Normally I would not record such an intimate event but her mother also comes down exactly at that moment to check on me: meeting her eyes, I surely felt that the errand and the epiphany mingled together then!

Another four years on I am in my first year out of high school, studying economics at night time, training as a hotel manager during the day. A friend and I have driven down, on a late evening whim, to Surfer's Paradise, the beach where I was later to meet my wife as she and another nurse I knew stepped over me sunbathing after body-surfing. My friend is driving his brother's old car, a transistor radio hanging from its little triangular window vent. We are returning home around 4:00 am. We have not been drinking but tiredness has certainly crept up on us. Wearing seat belts is not then mandatory. For reasons I could never explain, I suggest we stop and put our seat belts on. Somewhat testily — for he has been lost in that pleasant cocoon of nighttime driving soothed by motion and music — he pulled over and we disentangled the old-fashioned straps and fastened them on. We are driving on a major national highway but it is two-way traffic and relatively narrow. We come hard around a right-hand curving corner to find an old codger in a 1940s utility hogging the full center of both lanes in the civil dawn. That confronting image is seared in my



photo by von Rubinstein

vision still.

Thick trees and fence posts prevent my friend steering off much into the left of the corner. He eases his turn slightly but must pull back into the corner (here we drive on the left side of our roads!). Time slows down to microseconds. Centrifugal forces build so strongly there can be no doubt but that the car is going to turn over. Both of us are now passengers in the unfolding event, the sensory anticipation of which is palpable, heavy, looming. Next thing the car has flipped onto its roof sliding forward down the highway, the grating noise of metal shearing on the bitumen

unimaginably heavy-metal loud, showers of sparks enveloping us as we hang suspended upside down by our seat belts. I imagine either being impaled by metal shards or the car's suddenly exploding in a flash of fire. The noise is deafening yet somehow a distant backdrop so intense is the moment. My friend's seat belt unfastens and my arms batten onto him as he crashes into me: the car has flipped again. We come to rest at least 40 yards down from the corner, on the other side of the road, in the roadside ditch right way up and facing back the way we had been coming. The only injuries we have are a myriad pockmarks of small lacerations from flying debris. There is dirt forced deep in the base of the pockets of our beach shorts, in our ears and our noses. There is nary a sign of the old codger.

As if there has been no change at all in our respective worlds, The Beach Boys still play loudly on the transistor radio. We look at each other in amazement. I think of this as my almost-negated epiphany. The chances of fate rolled our way that dawn but need they have had we not stopped - where would that old codger have been then? I cannot explain them but have listened carefully to my intuitions ever since.

There is more to retelling these stories than I envisaged. Let me finish with a quick one having a nexus to Second

Life. Four years ago I am suddenly conscious of an unimaginable intensity of colors. It is a stunning, overwhelming sensation of absolute immersion in color - as if I have become sighted after a lifetime of blindness. My first thought, the only immediate explanation my mind can compass, is to think that somehow I have teleported into Second Life, but not as an avatar so much as a consciousness living in "The Matrix." That I am become the very beauty I am now so absorbed in. Reinforcing the illusion of SL, this young woman, striking and commanding, is staring at me with the fierce hawk-like eyes of a predator or inquisitor. Her lips are moving. I realize belatedly she is talking to me. I have just woken from a general anaesthetic and my Korean-born doctor is asking me how I feel after her endoscopic excavations.

Drug-induced phenomena are no answer. How can I ever trust myself when I fall for someone in a split second of utter confusion like that? What manner of adult am I? Why do I confound reality with virtual reality? Tenuous possibility with harsh actuality?

Today's meditations while walking have taken me on a long detour indeed.

• r — e — z •

Spring Morning After Be Tamera Boberg



erry

As morning fog billows on the pasture hillside
at the intersection of dawn and full light,
the great boiling ball creates glistening diamond dew
crowning brome, curly dock, red clover, and alfalfa.

Accompanying is the caw of red-wing blackbird
underneath the melody of western meadowlark.

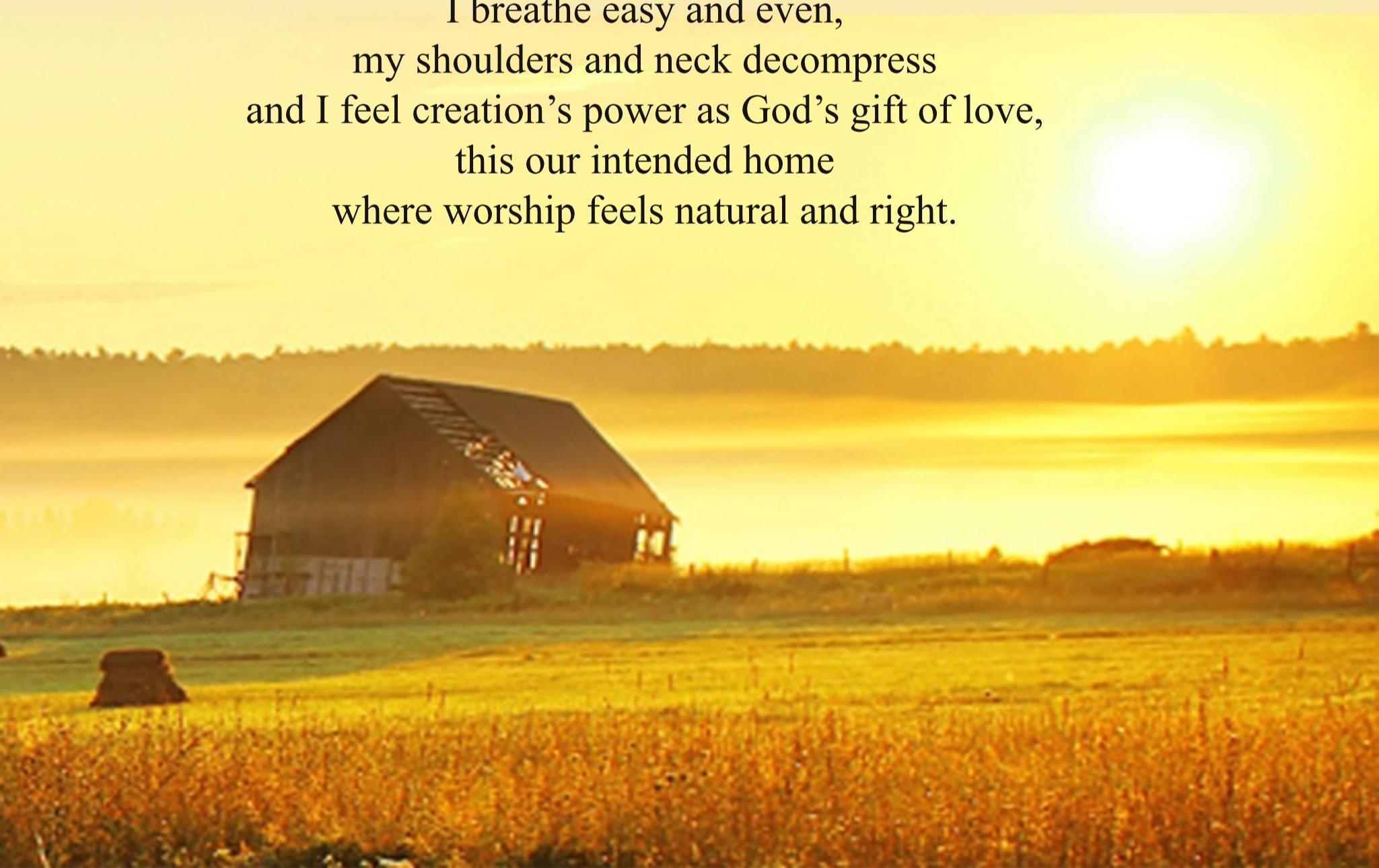
Chicks that have left their brooder,
scratch their way to what is good and healthful.

I am arrested in the moment
standing in still air, toes soaked,
arms akimbo with fists at my hips.

Sounds are pure and clear as I squint at the rising orb
when even the wing feather of passing dove is heard.

I suppress the reel of the city
winding me in to itself.

Pausing here, in this bucolic moment,
I breathe easy and even,
my shoulders and neck decompress
and I feel creation's power as God's gift of love,
this our intended home
where worship feels natural and right.



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